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When a Man Dies, Shall  
He Live Again?

BY

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## When A Man Dies, Shall He Live Again?

I HAVE taken as the title of this lecture a famous and well-known question: "When a man dies, shall he live again?" Yet we, as Theosophists, should at once traverse that question by saying that the man never dies. The form in which this question is phrased is, of course, well-known, although that conception of man as being subject to death is as false as anything can possibly be. If you look at death as a gateway separating one world from another, then you may truly say that a man passes through the gateway of death. But the man himself does not die; and when we speak of a man dying, it reminds one of another phrase, the question: "Has man a soul?" which is couched on very much the same idea of a man: That he is a body and has a soul—whereas the true view of a man is that he is a soul and has a body; the body being simply a passing incident in his everlasting life. So that my very first statement with regard to death will be a negation of part of the title. The man does not live again, he is ever living, and death has no power to take away from him the life which is inherent in his nature.

This question as to the life on the other side of death is one of perennial interest, and when we



remember that death is certain to each of us it is strange how little many of us know what lies on the other side. While the religions of the world have always spoken of the life beyond death's gateway, they have rarely given any definite information about it, and for the great majority death hides an unknown country. Now surely that ought not to be so. Surely a condition into which we are passing by thousands day by day ought to be a condition of which some definite knowledge can be gained. And we find, when we look at the religions of the world, that their founders have always been people who have claimed to possess first-hand knowledge of what lies beyond death. It is said of the Founder of the Buddhist faith that He remarked that if you ask a man the way to a particular village, who has never been to that village, he cannot accurately describe to you the road; and that it is useless to ask a man who has never visited them about the other worlds. And He went on to say that He Himself knew those worlds as the people around Him knew their own villages, and, knowing the worlds beyond death, He was able to tell them of the way, and of the happenings in those worlds. But He is by no means alone in that claim. The early teachers of Christianity, you will find, speak in a similar way of exact knowledge; and they have the idea, in common with other religions, that a man can separate soul and body during his physical life, and that death should not be the first time in which body and soul are consciously separated from each other. Nay, in some of the religions of the world people go much farther, and say that every night of our lives we leave our body when we go to sleep, and that sleep is nothing more than the process of the man leaving the physical body, and that death is nothing more than a sleep, the only difference between sleeping

and dying being that in the sleep of death the man does not return after he has left the body, and that the link between the body and the man is broken which remains unbroken during sleep. And if the people realise that, something of the fear which presses on many people with regard to the act of dying will pass away. If people realise that they are continually going through that experience of parting soul and body, then the fear of the mere act of dying would entirely pass away. As a matter of fact there is no suffering in death. Even in the case of the sudden striking away of the physical body there is no suffering. And that is not simply the testimony of those who speak from occult investigation; for questions addressed to people who have met with very serious accidents, which have left them senseless (so that if they had truly passed away from the body they would have passed on to the other side without again coming into physical life), have elicited the reply that so far as the blow that struck them senseless was concerned there was no kind of pain. These answers confirm the testimony of the occult student, that the mere act of dying is unaccompanied with pain.

Passing from that, let us ask whether there is any difference, and if so what, between sleep and death. There is a slight difference, but not one in which feeling is mixed up at all. When you go to sleep, the soul leaves the body, clothed in what we call the astral body, a body of much subtler material than the physical. Now in death there is a slight difference; for in the process of dying the subtler part of the physical body (which we call the "etheric double") is separated from the denser part, and this does not normally happen when a person goes to sleep; although it occurs in cases of trance, whether it be

under chloroform, ether, mesmeric influence, or in the trance which is connected with mediumship. Where a medium goes into trance, this separation of the dense and etheric parts of the physical body takes place, and the latter serves as the basis for materialisations. In this, again, there is no pain.

The evidence with regard to the life after death which it is most easy for the enquirer to obtain is that which comes along the line of spiritualistic investigation; and although I am not a spiritualist, and consider that along that line there are certain dangers to be carefully guarded against, still it would not be right to speak on evidence available on this subject without acknowledging the enormous debt that everyone owes to the spiritualistic investigators, for the way in which they have made available evidence which appeals to the majority of people through the physical senses. There are a large number of people who will only recognise a fact when the fact carries with it some physical demonstration, and I venture to say that everyone who has looked carefully and at first hand into spiritualistic evidence will be ready to say that even when you have put on one side every case where challenge may fairly be made, there remains an irreducible minimum of fact which it is impossible to deny. For I find the people most positive that there is no evidence to be found in Spiritualism are mostly those who have not taken the trouble to investigate. Along this line, then, may be obtained evidence addressed to the physical senses, and I do not know any other way along which such evidence can be obtained: because when you are going to deal with conditions in which the physical body has been dropped, the only way of gaining evidence appealing to the physical

body of others is by persuading the entity who has dropped his body to utilise the body of someone else. And for those who are purely materialists, I can conceive no better first step in the direction of certainty than that which they may gain from a carefully chosen spiritualistic séance; and, for those who do not want to investigate personally, there is available literature of the most satisfactory character; and any one who will read Sir William Crookes' investigations, and see the scientific character of the tests to which he submitted his phenomena, will, if human testimony is to be regarded as valuable, be prepared to accept that as a proof of survival after death.

Now and then the complaint is made that certain conditions are not imposed. But those who know anything of scientific investigations will be aware that no early experiments can be carried on under what are called strict test conditions—for the simple reason that no one knows in the earlier stages of experiments what are the conditions under which successful experiments can take place. No one, when first experiments were made in electrical science, insisted on laying down conditions, and said that no manifestations of electricity could be satisfactory unless they appeared in an atmosphere permeated with moisture! If that ridiculous condition had been laid down the results would never have appeared. But would that have proved that electrical science was impossible? Or would it only have shown that it is Nature that lays down the conditions for the happening of phenomena, and that we are to accommodate ourselves to Nature? Every scientific man knows that he must make his experiments all over the place, observing everything that happens, until he has found out Nature's conditions; then, conforming himself to those, he can bring about results without fear of failure. I

say this in order to defend many unfairly judged people, who are attacked by scientific men in a most unscientific way.

Permit me to repeat here a story which is exceedingly instructive for the scientific man: it is the story of the conditions supposed to be imposed on photography in China, before photography was known there. A photographer is said to have gone into the middle of China, and to have offered to take pictures by sunlight. Everyone laughed at him; for how was it possible for the sun to make pictures? It was clear he was a fool. But further examination into his methods showed that he was less a fool than a knave. The whole of his procedure was an endeavour to delude the people. The first thing he did for his picture-making was to put a black cloth over the box! and it was clear he could easily introduce under that cloth any number of pictures ready made. The fact that he insisted on putting it over the camera showed that he desired to cheat. He further insisted on bringing in a closed case, which nobody was allowed to open to see whether pictures were not concealed within. He would not let anyone look at that case to prove there were no pictures there, and he insisted on putting it into the camera under the black cloth. Of course, you can see at once that he cannot make pictures unless he puts them into his little case beforehand, and slips them into the camera when nobody is allowed to look! Clearly he is a fraud. And then, when he pretends he has got his pictures, what does he do? Does he open the box and show them? No; he wraps up his little case in the black cloth and carries it off into a room where no sunlight is allowed to enter, although he pretends he is making the pictures by the sun. As if the sunlight that makes the pictures should not be allowed to enter in at all!

So, in order to prove that he was able to take a picture by sunlight, they laid down as the test conditions that he should do it in an open box, and that everybody might take out and examine his plates to show that there were no pictures concealed. Nor must he go into a dark room, and talk to them about developing. They were far too clever people to be cheated in that barefaced manner, and he was a miserable fraud. Such was the decision; but, of course, under those test conditions they did not get any pictures. Apply that nearer home, and you will find it an exceedingly good illustration of the way in which people who know nothing about the conditions under which phenomena happen, lay impossible conditions down, and then insist on the production of phenomena.

The Theosophist, however, does not usually make use of Spiritualism for finding out what lies on the other side of death, because he does not think it a good thing for those who are passing onwards to be brought back into the earth-life; it is better for them to lose the clinging to these lower interests, and try to pass on into higher conditions. Moreover, Theosophists do not think the results which are likely to be obtained in this way are results which can be thoroughly reliable. They are not sufficiently wide. Granted that you may receive statements as to what is happening on the other side; but they will, for the most part, be drawn from a comparatively limited circle. And that, I think, is for the very simple reason that it is only those who are comparatively near to the physical world who can thus return and communicate with those who are still in the body. It is as though you were receiving from people travelling in a foreign land, without introductions (so to speak) to the wider interests of that land,

reports from their own narrow circle of experience. They do not furnish us with enough information to give us a definite certainty as to the conditions of the higher planes.

As you probably know, Theosophy says that the best way of finding out what happens on the other side of death is to train yourself to investigate; by yourself leaving your body and passing into those wider realms, studying the conditions there, and bringing back definite knowledge which may be confirmed by further experiment.

Now what is the first thing that strikes the investigator when he studies the conditions into which he temporarily passes? The first thing that strikes him is that the men and women who pass through death are not changed by the passing; that the mere dropping of the physical encasement has not changed the people themselves. Their affections, their thoughts, their emotions, their interests, are all the same. He is struck with overwhelming force by the continuity of life. We shall be the same on the other side as we are here. Death works no miracle. If a man goes out of the world with all his interests here, with all his passions and appetites potent, all his interests and passions will still be the same when he awakens on the other side. And when that is recognised, we begin to be able to judge our condition there by what we know of our condition here. There is not one of you who could not forecast your experiences there by analysing the things that interest you most here, and seeing how much of these you can carry to the other side. It is this fact which makes the knowledge of the other side so imperative-ly necessary for us—for that life is terribly handicapped by the ignorance prevailing amongst the majority of us as to its conditions.

The way in which you pass out of the body conditions your immediate experiences on the other side, and for that reason you must thoroughly realise that there is nothing to fear; for that dread which is in men's minds here possesses them on the other side, and makes the first obstacle to peace and happiness that has to be overcome. There is nothing more troublesome on the other side than the state of the people who go out of this life believing in eternal torture. The idea springs up in the mind when they find that they have left the earth: and though there be nothing to justify it, the thought they have carried with them tortures them, until they can be persuaded that it is not true. So that if you can get rid of that idea on this side, you will be taking one step towards truth on the other. I know very well that this nightmare is gradually dying out of popular belief; I know that many Christian clergymen are preaching the gospel of hope instead of the gospel of despair; but still some believe it, and you should get rid of that terrible superstition before you leave the body, so that you may not have that spectre to face on the other side of death.

The next thing I must say is that, following out the law which cannot be broken, there is nevertheless in many cases temporary suffering. But no one need go through that suffering unless, by folly here, the conditions are made that assert themselves as suffering there. If you allow your appetites to overcome you, if you live a life of profligacy, gluttony, or drunkenness, or give way to violent passions—if you pass out of the body with those evil things unconquered, it is true that you must suffer for a time on the other side of death. The suffering is inevitable, although not everlasting. It is easily understood.



You must have heard sometimes how a drunkard suffers if he cannot obtain strong drink when the moment of craving comes over him. Time after time it is said by the drunkard : " I would break the habit if I could, but when the craving comes it carries me off my feet ; the suffering is so terrible that I must satisfy it at all risks." My answer, now that I know what lies on the other side, is clear and simple : " You must face that suffering at one time or another ; better face it on this side of death, where every advantage is with you, than on the other side, when the difficulties will be enormously greater." For the body in which the man is living on the other side is composed of much subtler matter, and the same force in the subtler body is very much more effective than when it is moving the heavy physical matter. The same amount of energy has more effective powers as craving, and it cannot be gratified. During my own experience I have known an explanation of this kind given to a drunkard enable him to break the chains of that terrible habit ; for when he once realised that he could not escape the struggle, he fought the battle and killed his enemy on this side of death, instead of leaving the terrible combat to the other side. There you have a means of helping those who are under the chain of some evil physical habit. You can encourage them to break it here, instead of under conditions of keener suffering hereafter. For it must be broken ! Every living soul is essentially divine ; and it may not remain in that bondage, tied by the fetters of drunkenness, gluttony, or lust. They are too much against its inherent divine nature ; they are too much against the aspirations which no soul, by virtue of its divinity, is utterly without. And every fetter of sense which degrades the soul is better broken off during the physical life than in the post-mortem existence.

The next thing we notice is that a great many people find their life on the other side exceedingly dull for a long time—and that is one of the reasons why they try to get into touch with the earth again. All their interests were here; they had no interests here which they could carry on with them, and the result is they have to wear out the interests, and it takes a very considerable time. Over and over again we notice that souls are held in bondage here by these ties to the earth, instead of passing onwards to conditions far happier. That is, perhaps, the commonest stage on the other side—a period of weariness and of lacking interests. Very much of the help that is given on the other side is given to those who are under these conditions, in persuading them to face for a time the weariness, for the sake of the greater happiness that lies beyond; to work through the tie which they have rendered inevitable, so that they may pass onwards as quickly as may be, and reap the harvest which is waiting for them a little farther on.

The recognition of the law will give you many hints for the choice which you may exercise in this life, especially in your hours of leisure, in utilising those for the higher part of you and not only for the lower. Out of the many forms of pleasure placed before young men and women, they might well exercise a wise choice, choosing the pleasures that tend rather to elevate the emotions than those which degrade and animalise them. Here, of course, you come into a question of profound interest—the question of the amusements of the great masses of the people. So long as these amusements are of the most trivial and stupid kind; so long as the music offered to them is only music by courtesy, and nothing else; so long as that is what the caterers of amusement

offer to the public—you cannot blame those who seek amusement for taking what they can get, if there is nothing else available for them. I am not speaking against amusements which are really a relaxation and not another form of study, but I *do* say that in those amusements there might be something of beauty, something of art, something of taste, something of refinement, so that young men and women who go into a music-hall should come out of it the better for the amusement and not the worse. You may say: "What has that to do with the life after death? A great deal, because all these young people have to pass through that life after death, and they can take with them something that will last. Mere jingle and folly cannot be carried on to that side; but the refining of the emotions which comes from listening to music which may be tuneful, melodious, and beautiful, and yet by no means silly—such an amusement will give them something that they can carry on to that other side. For there also is music, beautiful beyond anything that the earth can give; there also is beauty of the most entrancing kinds; but it is beauty that appeals to the nobler emotions, and those ought to be cultivated on this side of death. Having once gone the round of those amusements myself, in order to see what really did amuse the people, I found there was glad and eager response where some noble or tender sentiment lay beneath the song and the melody; I found that these were more responded to than the mere vulgar rattle, and that there was an answer of the emotional nature where the opportunity for that answer was afforded. When I suggest that it would be well to prepare for life after death I do not mean it in that gloomy sense in which some people say: "Prepare for death," "Prepare to meet your God"; but I say: Prepare in a rational, thoughtful, sensible manner, and do it

by the cultivation of the nobler emotions, and not simply by the satisfaction of the lower animal tastes.

Passing from that kind of preparation, let us see what else we can do to make richer and fuller that life on the other side of death. It is a life of progress. You start where you left this world, but you climb onwards and onwards for long ages of peace and joy. And you progress by that which you take with you as a starting-point; for you cannot make there fresh starting-points. You can carry on anything you have begun here, but complete initiation of a new line of mental and emotional activity is not possible on the other side of death. You will have as material for your progress, all that you have thought on this side; and if you want to ensure on the other side of death centuries of happy, peaceful progress, now is the time for making the material which will render that progress inevitable. Every great aspiration that for a moment has illuminated your heart, every desire for human service, every kindly wish for the helping of a fellow creature, every hope and struggle and endeavour that you have made for human good, come back to you there as the material out of which your progress will be fashioned. Think what it means! So many of you have hearts larger than your opportunities, feelings which go beyond your practical capacities. Do not let your heart break, you who are tender to the sorrow of the world. Sympathise as much as you can; feel as much as you can; be sorry for the sorrowful; and do not shrink from the pain of human sympathy. For every feeling that you have had during your earth-life will come back to you in your life in the heavenly places; and you will build it, not into futile hope as you may have thought, but into capacity to achieve; when your time comes to be born again in the world, you

will come back to it with your heart and your brain full of schemes for human welfare that you will be able to carry out, every hope turned into a power, and every pulse of sympathy into a faculty to help. Not one throb of sorrow will be lost; you will find it in the treasure-house of heaven to work into power—power to conceive and to bless. That is part of the good news we bring from the other side—and how good it is only those know whose hearts have almost broken in facing the misery of the world. Not one of you need pass through death's gateway without carrying with you material of that splendid kind which, in the heavenly places, you will thus weave into faculty and power.

And so also with every emotion that you have so often on this side of death. Emotions of love give, perhaps, as much pain as pleasure—sometimes even more. Do not shrink from the pain which comes from a noble love, even though it be unrequited. The love of the mother for the son who almost breaks her heart, the love of the father for the daughter who has wandered far from home, the love of husband for wife, or wife for husband, where due return has not been given, the love of friend for friend outliving even neglect and betrayal—those loves come back to us in the higher worlds and enrich and glorify our heaven. For there is not one human soul for whom we have kept our love untouched and unbroken, not one human soul that here we may seem to have lost, that there we shall not find. All souls that love each other find each other out in heaven, for the bond of love is a bond over which the icy hand of death has no power; love is immortal, love is divine; and the son that has broken his mother's heart in his manhood, loved his mother when he was a little boy playing round her knees: and that love-tie is only submerged, and will

re-assert itself on the other side of death. So that where your love becomes a pain instead of a joy, cling to it and clasp it to your heart, and it will bring you to the place of joy. And in that world of love and of peace the power to love will grow with the loves which here have been disappointed; and every disappointed love is a jewel which will be worked up into the great mosaic of faculty that we shall make in heaven.

Pass from the emotions that deal with love, and think of the artistic emotions. These are part of the soul and not of the body. There is much frustrated art in this world; so many who can do a little but not much, for lack of faculty; so many with great ambitions and poor achievements; so many who dream more than they can realise. Let them still have the courage and dream on; let them dream of the Beauty that they cannot reproduce, of the Music and the Painting and the Sculpture that only gleam to them in visions, which their hands are unable to fabricate. The power to achieve will be made from the aspiration. Practice whatever power you have; do not be ashamed of it because it is small; cultivate it, water it, let the sun shine on it: and, in the grander world beyond, that seed of art will flower into genius, and none of the efforts will be wasted.

And not only the emotions, but the intelligence grows there, far more swiftly than it does here. The man who is eager for knowledge but cramped in the narrow conditions of his daily life, shall not he also have his harvest on the other side of death? Only do not let him lose grip of that desire for knowledge; and let him steal day by day out of his busy time, if only a few minutes, in which he may read some great book, in which he may study some great thought. It may not be much, but

perhaps even in the omnibus or train, passing between his home and his office, he may be able to snatch a few moments for study. Although he may only read twelve or fifteen lines a day, those lines will multiply week by week, and month by month, and year by year, and that mental accumulation that he has made by his study will be the material with which his intelligence will grow when he passes to the life on the other side of death.

I want you to realise, if possible, how much you can do to make that life a life of progress and of growth. Life here is so narrow and crude. On every side circumstances wall us in, and we realise that there is no possibility of ever climbing those walls. Never mind. Death will knock them down, although you cannot over-climb them. Only keep belief in the divinity of your own nature, and know that you are destined to grow to perfection, and that it is only a question of time when that perfection will show itself to the world. And you can shorten the time by understanding the law; you can prepare for the progress in the heavenly life by utilising the little fragments of time stolen from the pressure of daily life. And this life will become gladder and stronger when it is full of hope; for no man who has hope can be utterly miserable; and hope will shed its gleams over the greyest life and gild even the clouds that too often gather around us. For the time there is so much more than the time here—hundreds upon hundreds of years there, and here a few score only. We do not really belong here; our world is the heavenly world, and we just come down for a few brief moments of earth-life to gather what we need for our true life in heaven. You see sometimes a bird whose life is in the air, a bright, radiant creature who soars in the sunshine, drop down from

the air to which he belongs into the water, for the purpose of catching the food on which he is to live; and just as the bird's flight in the atmosphere is, compared to the momentary plunge into the ocean in search of food, so is our true life in the world of spirit, compared to this brief dash downwards into the world of matter.

That is the truth as all know it who can see on the other side of death—a great and joyful truth; for that is our world rather than this; and this world is ours for the gathering of experience, or for the doing of service. Those are the two great objects of the earth-life; to gather experience whereby to grow; to do service, which is the element of the Christ-growth. No life is worth the having which is filled only by selfish thought and cold indifference to the wants of the world around. That life only is fit to grow in the heavenly places which is a life of sharing, of giving of everything that one has gathered. And there is this joyous thing about all the real goods of life; the goods of intelligence, of emotion, of art, of love—all the things which are really worth the having—they do not waste in the giving; they grow the more, the more we give. Those physical things get smaller as we take away from them, leaving so much less for future use; and so, when it is a question of sharing the physical things, men calculate and say: "I have only enough for myself, for my wife, for my child. How can I give any away?" All that is matter is consumed in the using; but that is not true of the higher things, the things of the intelligence, of the heart, and of the Spirit. If I know something, I do not lose it when I teach it. Nay! it becomes more truly mine because I have shared it with one more ignorant than myself; so that



you have two people enriched by knowledge, by the sharing of a store that increases, instead of diminishing, as it is shared. And so with all that is worth having. You need not fear to lessen your own possessions by throwing them broadcast to your hungry fellow-men. Give your knowledge, your strength, your love; empty yourself utterly, and when for a moment you think you are empty, then from the inexhaustible fount of love, and beauty, and power, more flows down to fill the empty vessel, making it fuller, and not emptier than it was before.

There is the secret of a useful life; there the inspiration to noble living—nothing that I can win that is worth having, which does not grow as I share it with my fellows. And those who have thus learned, those who see the physical and compare it, worthless as it is, with the emotional, the intellectual, the spiritual, they, and they alone, are wise, and know how to live; and as they live, their lives are a benediction; and when they die, their lives are a continual progress; and when they return, they bring the fruits of the progress to share them also with their fellow-men. And so they learn to be the Servants, the Guides, and the Saviours of the world.

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No. 62

Gautama the Buddha

BY

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ADYAR, MADRAS, INDIA



## Gautama the Buddha<sup>1</sup>

DURING a sojourn of eighteen years in Western lands, it has been a wonder to me how little an understanding of Buddhism there is even among learned people. Hundreds of books dealing with Buddhism exist in the chief European languages—texts and translations, essays and manuals; and yet to a Buddhist born in Buddhist traditions, how little do they give the spirit of Buddhism. In spite of the learned writings of western savants, so erudite and so painstaking, to a Buddhist there is but one book that describes his faith as he feels it, and that book is a poem and not a learned professor's masterpiece of research and learning. It is to Edwin Arnold's poem, *The Light of Asia*, that the Buddhist turns as the only book in a western tongue which fittingly describes the Buddhism that he knows, not that of dry sacred scriptures in a dead language, but the real living Buddhism of to-day. Why does a Buddhist turn away impatiently from the magnificent erudition of Germany, England and France, and turn to the work of a poet?

<sup>1</sup> This article was first published in Italian in 1908, in the philosophical Quarterly *Ccenobium*, published in Lugano, Switzerland.

The reason is very simple and yet so very difficult for a scholar to understand. To the learned professor of the West, Buddhism is a system of philosophy, a religion, a morality, a splendid intellectualism ; to the Buddhist in a Buddhist land, Buddhism is the Buddha ! How is it possible to describe the influence of His personality among us, how it is that that affects our lives and not philosophical doctrines ? None but those born in the East can even dimly realise how the personality of Gautama the Buddha has stamped itself on the imagination of the people, with what awe, reverence, love and gratitude, men and women regard Him, whose constant assertion was that He was a man, and what all men could become. Imagination has played round His personality with hymns of praise and adoration, trying to realize the sublimity and tenderness of His character.

Hundreds of names try to express the deep emotion. He is the King of Righteousness, the Master, the Blessed One, the Lord of the World, the Teacher of gods and men ; daily they speak of Him in Ceylon and Burma as the Omniscient Lord. Yet they believe that He was a man, as all men, and not one to be worshipped as divine in ways that He did not share with His fellow-men. The greater the wonder, then, at this devotion to a man.

How can one, not a Buddhist, however learned he be, get to the heart of Buddhism without feeling the

love and gratitude and reverence that those in Buddhist lands have to the great Master? Can a Hindu be said to understand what is the love of Christ that made the saints and martyrs, inspired the art of the Renaissance and the builders of the cathedrals of Europe, by mere perusal of the Gospels? Can he get to the spirit, with none to guide him, by merely reading the letter? Can he be said to understand the Christ, if to him the Christ is a mere philosopher and theorist, like a Hegel or a Kant?

It is because Edwin Arnold imagines himself a Buddhist and with his poetic fancy enters into a Buddhist atmosphere, that in his poem the Buddha is the central figure, and so his work is to the Buddhist a satisfactory exposition of Buddhism. Go to Ceylon, that centre of Buddhism, or to Burma, and watch what the religion is. Be present at a temple on a full-moon day and observe what takes place.

Each full-moon day is a festival, and from morn till night the temple life is busy. With the early dawn come the pious men and women who that day dedicate themselves to devotion and meditation. They are dressed in white, and all ornaments and jewels, the vanities of the world, have been left at home. To them a yellow-robed monk repeats in Pāli the simple vows every Buddhist makes, not to kill, not to take by fraud what belongs to another, not to commit adultery, not to lie, and not to take intoxicants. They repeat the vows

after the monk, but the whole ceremony begins with "Reverence to the Master, the Blessed One, the Omniscient Lord." Three times this is said, and then follows, thrice repeated, "I take my refuge in the Buddha, in His Truth, and in His Saints."

It is always with the thought of the Master that every ceremony begins. Then they take fresh flowers and go into the holy of holies, where is the image of the Master. The image is often cross-legged in the attitude of ecstasy, or standing up in the attitude of benediction, or reclining on the right side as was His custom when meditating; but always the eyes are bent down on the pious devotee. To one side of the image of Gautama, and standing always, is the image of the next Buddha to come, the Bodhisattva Maitreya, but already in anticipation of His next appearance called by the people the Buddha Maitreya. The image of Gautama is brown, for He was a Hindu; this image is white, according to tradition. In His own good time He will come, when the world is ready for Him, once again to do what all Buddhas have ever done, to dispel ignorance and proclaim the eternal truths.

The flowers are laid on the altar, and in ancient Pali the devotees repeat the praise and adoration of the Buddha, "perfect in knowledge, who has come the good journey that led to the Buddhahood, the Teacher of Gods and men, who has done that which was to be done, who has crossed to the other

shore (Nirvana)”; of His Doctrine, the Truth, the Dhamma, “inviting all comers, to be understood by the wise for themselves”; of His Saints of the Yellow Robe, the ancient “Brotherhood of the Noble Ones,” who have entered “the Path”.

In the evening the temple is lit with thousands of tiny lights; crowds, dressed in white or in their best of gorgeous silks, gather now to hear the sermon, to reverence the Master, “to take refuge” in Him, to take the vows, to offer flowers and burn incense, all moving with eagerness in the tropical moonlight hardly less bright than the white they wear. Then at the appointed time, to the beating of drums, comes the monk, with his escort of devout attendants, to give the discourse. Following immemorial tradition, he begins chanting musically in sonorous Pāli, “Reverence to the Master, the Blessed One, the Omniscient Lord.” After him the people repeat this, and “the three Refuges” and the five vows.

It is of the life of the Master the yellow-robed monk tells the people, how at such a place and under such circumstances He did this or said that; how in the valley of the Ganges 2,600 years ago the Master, a man, and not a God, lived a perfect life of compassion, loving His fellow-men as a mother loves her only child, and showed the way to truth and freedom from sorrow. How can anyone think he is competent to talk about Buddhism without feeling all this? He may write much and learnedly about Buddhism as a



philosopher, but unless he feels in his heart what the Buddha was, his Buddhism is of the West, and not of the East, where yet broods the spirit of the great Teacher.

In the sixth century before Christ, India was already old. Men talked even then of their ancient philosophers. Reincarnation had been for centuries a fact of the normal consciousness of the Hindu. Karma, the law of "Action," was as the air he breathed, that none questioned nor dreamed of questioning.

Philosophy was the one essential of life. The priestly Brahman, the warrior Kshattriya, the merchant Vaishya, all had for centuries taken part in philosophical speculations. Nor were women backward in contributing their share to the one and all-absorbing topic. Maitreyī discusses philosophical problems with her husband, the sage Yājñavalkya; Gārgī, too, takes part in many a philosophical tournament, though vanquished in the end. Many a woman, like Gārgī, travelled about India, with her particular phase of the then "new thought," and drew many disciples round her.

Children also assert their rights to be heard, and courteously their elders listen to them, for, it may be, the child is an ancient philosopher come back to life. Nachiketas, a boy—than whom none more famous in India—because "faith entered him," visits King Yama, the ruler of the spirits of the dead, and

questions the King of Death about what he alone could tell, what lay behind all births and deaths, the final end of evolution for the soul.<sup>1</sup> “Young Kavi, the son of Angiras, taught his relatives who were old enough to be his fathers, and, as he excelled them in sacred knowledge, he called them ‘Little Sons’. They, moved with resentment, asked the gods concerning that matter, and the gods, having assembled, answered, ‘The child has addressed you properly. For a man destitute of sacred knowledge is indeed a child, and he who teaches him the Veda is his father; for the sages have always said ‘child’ to an ignorant man, and ‘father’ to a teacher of the sacred science.’”<sup>2</sup>

Every village and hamlet had its lecture hall, where travelling philosophers were made welcome and entertained, and much all revelled in the keen disputations. All who had any new theory to propound, men and women, old or young, were equally honoured, for on this platform they were equal as seekers of the Truth.

Many of the philosophical schools had nicknames that have come down to us; there were “the hair-splitters,” “the eel-wrigglers,” “the eternalists, semi-eternalists, extensionists, fortuitous-originationists,” “the wanderers,” “the Friends,” and so on without number. There is hardly a phase of modern

<sup>1</sup> Katha Upanishad.

<sup>2</sup> Manu, II. 151—153.

philosophic thought—whether of Bruno, Kant, Nietzsche, or any other philosopher you like to mention—hardly a phase of scepticism and agnosticism, that does not find its prototype in those far off days in India.

Yet all was not well in India at this time, the sixth century B. C. A restlessness was everywhere manifest in the world of thought. Orthodoxy held rigidly bound in incredibly wearisome ritual alike priest, warrior and merchant. Slowly the priestly Brahman was asserting his right, as the intermediary between Gods and men, to be higher than the other two “twice-born” castes; and many a Brahman, having little sanctity but much caste, exercised ruthlessly his priestly power to oppress those beneath him. A rigid ecclesiasticism held men bound in caste duties and ceremonial, and originality and individual initiative had little chance under the all-powerful routine. It seemed, too, as though the sages of old had canvassed all mysteries, human and divine, and nothing more remained to be said; and yet there was still something lacking. Philosophy after philosophy was studied, and yet there was felt the need for something, though none knew what. It was the period of travail of the soul of the nation, and the general conditions were not unlike what is found in Western lands in the twentieth century now.

Restless as were men’s minds, there was something that was almost more noticeable still. Pitiable

in many ways was the condition of the non-Aryan members of the nations, the millions that were not "twice-born" like the priest, warrior and merchant. Philosophy and the higher aspects of religion were not for the low-caste millions of men and women. The Veda could not be heard by them, nor were they taught "the Secret," that the human soul was the Divine Soul of the Universe. They could come merely to the outskirts of the sacred knowledge, the priceless possession of the Aryan Hindus. The Vedas would be polluted were they to be known by a low-caste man, a Shudra; and as to those without any caste at all, the Pariahs, they were thought of as no part of the Hindu community at all. Hence terrible threats of reprisal against any such that should dare to put himself on an equality with the twice-born. The ears a Shudra who listens intentionally when the Veda is being recited are to be filled with molten lead; his tongue is to be cut out if he recite it; his body is to be split in twain if he preserve it in his memory.<sup>1</sup> If he assume a position equal to that of twice-born men, in sitting, in lying down, in conversation or on the road, he is to undergo corporal punishment.<sup>2</sup>

Such were the threats which held in spiritual and social subjection the men of dark colour. For as

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Vedānta Sūtras, I. 3, 39, by both Shankarāchārya and Rāmānujāchārya as valid.

<sup>2</sup> Manu, and other Law Texts.

non-Aryans, who had not been Aryanised by inter-marriage or by religious ceremony, they were "without caste," without Varna. The three higher castes, originally light-complexioned, invaders from beyond the Himalayas, blood-brothers to the Greeks and Gauls, had gradually become browned by the Indian sun; but still they were lighter than the conquered, and called themselves "the coloured people"; and the non-Aryan conquered people, dark, almost black, were "without colour," without any Varna or caste at all.

True, a Shudra or an outcaste who chose to resign the world and dedicate himself to the life of an ascetic philosopher, became thereby a member of that chosen band of Sannyasis where all were equal and above all castes whatsoever. King and priest would honour such an one for what he was, forgetting what he was born. But the multitudes of the ordinary men and women, who were neither priests nor warriors nor merchants, whatever their abilities and qualifications might be, were rigidly barred from coming into direct touch with those higher speculations and discussions that relieved the monotony of the routine of daily duty. Yet, as events later showed, these millions of the "once-born" were true Hindus after all, for whom it was more practical to die, knowing God, than live without knowing Him.

The work that Gautama Buddha did has been called a reformation of Hinduism. Yet there were

many others before Him who led the way. Rebellion against the domination of the priestly caste, heterodoxy and heresies of all kinds, existed before and were tolerated as all somehow a part of Hinduism after all. But it was once again the personality of the Buddha that crystallised the aspirations for freedom of centuries, and gave them the broad platform of a Universal Faith. His reformation has its two aspects, social and religious.

As a social reformer He was the greatest "socialist" that ever could be, but different from the socialists of to-day in that He levelled up and not down. He, too, proclaimed an equality and a fraternity, but the standard of equality was not the lowest to which all could descend, but the highest to which all might ascend. His standard was the "Brahmana," the upright man of the highest caste, the "gentleman" of those days, noble in conduct, wise and serene. Up to the time of the Buddha, to be considered a Brahman one had to be born into the highest caste; it was Gautama who proclaimed that every man, even of the lowest caste, or more despised still, of no caste at all, could become a Brahman, by living the perfect life that every man born in the highest caste ought to live. To be a Brahman was a matter of conduct, of an education of the heart, of the training of the character; it was not a matter of caste at all. All were Brahmans "who live a holy life, who live an upright life, who live in the way of wisdom, who live

a life fulfilling their duties". "He who is tolerant with the intolerant, mild with the fault-finders, free from passion among the passionate, him I call indeed a Brahman. I do not call a man a Brahman because of his origin or of his mother. He may be called 'Sir'; he may be wealthy; but the poor who is free from evil qualities, him I call indeed a Brahman."<sup>1</sup> Again and again he outlines the conduct of the true Brahman. "As a mother, even at the risk of her own life, protects her son, her only son, so let him cultivate good-will without measure among all beings. Let him cultivate good-will without measure toward the whole world, above, below, around, unstinted, unmixed with any feeling of differing or opposing interests. Let a man remain steadfastly in this state of mind all the while he is awake, whether he be standing, sitting or lying down. This state of heart is the best in the world."<sup>2</sup> "And he lets his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of love, and so the second, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around and everywhere, does he continue to pervade with heart of love, far reaching, grown great and beyond measure."<sup>3</sup>

With such an ideal open to all, Gautama Buddha proclaimed a Socialism that appealed to the highest in men and not to their lower material interests. Caste still

<sup>1</sup> Vāsetṭha Sutta.

<sup>2</sup> Mettā Sutta, trans. by Rhys Davids.

<sup>3</sup> Mahā Sudassana Sutta, trans. by Rhys Davids.

exists in India to-day, and even in Buddhist lands; primitive ethnological instincts gained the day and caste was stronger than the Buddha Himself. But the ideal He proclaimed of the true Brahman is still the light for nearly a third of the human race.

The religious reformation that Gautama Buddha brought about was not novel to the thinkers of His day. Many of His ideas others had proclaimed before Him. But the way He enunciated them, the commanding and tender personality that men saw in Him—these were new. He proclaimed nothing new, but enabled each hearer to see the same old facts for himself from a new dimension. He taught men to put aside speculation and philosophical discussion, to aim first at an inner change of heart by a perfect life of harmlessness and compassion, to make perfectly calm the stormy sea of man's nature with its surging desires for pleasure or gain, so that when stilled it could reflect like a mirror the deep intuitions within them. Thus could a man be independent of priests and intercessors; thus alone could a man be a light unto himself and tread "the Path". "Be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge to yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the Truth as a lamp. Hold fast as a refuge to the Truth. Look not for refuge to any one besides yourselves."<sup>1</sup>

How the perfect life is to be lived is explained over and over again. First come the "Four Efforts,"

<sup>1</sup> Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta.



1. To do no fresh evil; 2. To get rid of evil done; 3. To produce goodness not previously existing; 4. To increase goodness already existing. Ten are the meritorious acts that the devotee must perform: 1. Charity; 2. Observing the precepts; 3. Meditation; 4. Giving an opportunity to others to partake in one's good actions; 5. Taking delight in the meritorious acts done by another; 6. Attending upon others; 7. Honouring those worthy of honour; 8. Explaining the doctrine; 9. Listening to explanations of the doctrine; 10. Going for refuge to the "Three Treasures"—the Buddha, the Truth, and the Saints. The meditations are five, on love, pity, joy, impurity and serenity.

Thus living he enters "the Path" and comes to liberation—Nirvana. Is Nirvana the cessation of all desires, the ending of existence, annihilation of being? But the books say we can know about Nirvana in three ways; first, by personal experience (*pachchakkha siddhi*); second, indirectly, at second hand, by reasoning and analysis (*anumeyya siddhi*); and similarly, third, by faith in the statements of those *who have experienced it* (*saddheyya siddhi*). Faith in the statements of those who have been "annihilated"?

Can one truly believe that millions of men and women, of normal affections and aspirations, go before the image of Buddha, lay flowers before Him, saying, "I take my refuge in Thee," and believe that He taught

the highest aim of existence was annihilation? When at a preaching in a temple, the monk in his discourse mentions merely the word Nirvana, and the audience send up a rapt and ecstatic shout of "Sādhu! Sādhu!" (Amen! Amen!)—can it be they feel Nirvana is annihilation?

What, then, is Nirvana? What did the Buddha Himself say? First, that none could know it at first hand who did not *live* the perfect life. It was not a mere question of intellectual grasp; you might speculate about it, but you could not know it, without living the life. There are experiences possible to the human soul that no intellect will ever analyse without proving their impossibility. And yet they *are*. How can one not steeped in the Upanishads, who does not feel what Plato meant by his noumenal World of Ideas, see anything but a negation of existence in Nirvana? Any life that is superpersonal, beyond the understanding of our senses, beyond our limited individuality, at once becomes unreal or a vague unindividual diluted unconscious existence.

Thus speak the Upanishads about the one source of existence, Brahman.

"There shines not sun, nor moon and stars, nor do these lightnings shine, much less this fire. When He shines forth, all things shine after Him; by His shining shines all here below." "Nor inwards conscious, nor outwards conscious, not conscious yet both ways; nor yet ingathered as to consciousness, nor even conscious nor yet

unconscious; what none can see, nor grasp nor comprehend, void of distinctive mark, unthinkable, past definition, naught but self-consciousness alone, that ends all going out, peaceful, benign, and secondless—this men think of as Fourth<sup>1</sup>; He is the Self, 'tis He who must be known.<sup>2</sup>

Surely all this seems abstraction, mere negation. But not so to the Hindu mind, which is trying to cognise something beyond the limitations of time, space and causality. The intense reality of That, its influence on daily life, is seen in many a verse like this: "Alone within this universe He comes and goes; 'tis He who is the fire, the water He pervadeth. Him and Him only knowing, one crosseth over death; no other path at all is there to go."

It is the same thing that is taught to Socrates. It is through Beauty and purified love that the That is to be realised. Thus Plato in the Symposium:

"For he who hath thus far had intelligence of love, and hath beheld all fair things in order and aright,—he drawing near to the end of things lovable shall behold a Being marvellously fair; for whose sake in truth it is that all the previous labours have been undergone: One who is from everlasting, and neither is born nor perisheth, nor can wax nor wane, nor hath change or turning or alteration of foul or fair; nor can that beauty be imagined after the fashion of face or hands or bodily parts and members, nor in any form of speech or knowledge, nor in dwelling in aught but itself; neither in beast nor man nor earth nor heaven nor any

<sup>1</sup> The "fourth state" is Nirvana; the other three being Jagrat, "waking" (physical and astral); Svapna, "sleep," the mental plane, the heavenly world; Sushupti, "deep sleep," the plane of Buddhi.

<sup>2</sup> Māndūkya Upanishad, trans. by Mead and Chatterji.

other creature ; but Beauty only and alone and separate and eternal, which, albeit all other fair things partake thereof and grow and perish, itself without change or increase or diminution endures for everlasting."

And finally thus Gautama Buddha speaks of Nirvana, the "fourth" state of consciousness of Hinduism. In Udānam, VIII, 2-3, is an extremely philosophic definition which is as follows :

"There is, O Brethren, that Abode, where there is indeed no earth nor water nor air ; nor the world of the Infinity-of-Space, nor the world of the Infinity-of-Intelligence, nor the world of No-Thing-Whatsoever, nor the world of Neither-Cognition-nor-Non-Cognition ; nor this World, nor the world yonder, and neither the sun nor the moon. That I call, O Brethren, neither coming nor going nor standing, nor birth nor death. Without foundation, without origination, beyond thought is That. The destruction of sorrow verily is That.

"There is, O Brethren, that which is unborn, unmanifested, uncreate and unconditioned. Unless, O Brethren, it were not unborn, unmanifested, uncreate and unconditioned, there could not be cognised in this world the coming forth of what is born, manifested, created and conditioned. And inasmuch as there exists what is unborn, unmanifested, uncreate and unconditioned, therefore is cognised the coming forth of what is born, manifested, created and conditioned.

One of the most brilliant of modern historians of Philosophy, Prof. Harald Höffding of Copenhagen, thus truly describes a Buddhist's conception of Nirvana.

"Nirvana is not a state of pure nothingness. It is a form of existence of which none of the qualities presented in the constant flux of experience can be predicated, and which, therefore, appears as nothingness to us in

comparison with the states with which existence has familiarized us. It is deliverance from all needs and sorrows, from hate and passion, from birth and death. It is only to be attained by the highest possible concentration of thought and will. In the mystical concept of God [of the German mystics] as well as in the Buddhist conception of Nirvana, it is precisely the inexhaustible positivity which bursts through every conceptual form and makes every determination an impossibility."<sup>1</sup>

Whatever Nirvana is, one thing can be predicated of it—it is not annihilation. When a monk, after a long discourse on spiritual matters, gives in the end the traditional benediction, "May you all attain Nirvana," and people say in response "Amen, Amen," they certainly have no conception of Nirvana as nothingness and cessation of being. In the words of a Buddhist saint, "Great King, Nirvana *is*."

In the article in *Coenobium*, July-August, 1907, dealing with Buddhism, some remarks are made about its relation to Theosophy, calling the latter Neo-Buddhism. How far Buddhism is Theosophy may be seen from the fact that certain fundamental ideas of Theosophy are looked upon and denounced as heretical by the Buddhists of Ceylon. If the impression in Europe is that Theosophy is Neo-Buddhism, the impression distinctly in Buddhist lands is that it is Neo-Christianity!

The truer statement is that Theosophy has much in common with the ideas of the early Buddhists, as it

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy of Religion*, Sect. 43, and Note 37.

has much in common with the ideas and beliefs of every religion in the earliest period of its life. Just as Christians are suspicious of Theosophy because of the idea of Reincarnation, so similarly orthodox Buddhists dislike Theosophy for its theism and its doctrine of the Logos. Similarly, too, there is strenuous opposition on the part of the orthodox Brahmans in India to the Theosophists, because Theosophy proclaims a common origin of all religions, and will not admit that any one religion has all the truth.

The broadening of the standpoint of truly religious men is inevitable, and the study of Theosophy is merely the outer symbol of an inner fact in the present life of civilised people. All sincere and earnest men, all impartial seekers of truth all over the world, are brought closer together by the dissemination of knowledge, possible now by means of printing and travel. As Science has made a common platform on which meet scientists of all nations, and such a platform was bound to be from the moment a great unifying ideal like Science appeared before the minds of investigators, so is there coming about slowly a platform on which are meeting together the more spiritual minded in all religions. Whether we call this platform a Philosophy of Religion, Neo-Christi-anity, Neo-Buddhism, or Theosophy, matters little. It is the fact that is important, and that none who observe the signs of the times can gainsay.

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ADYAR PAMPHLETS

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# The Superphysics of the Great War

*(Reprinted from the Central Hindu College Magazine)*

BY

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## The Superphysics of the Great War

It is true that no course of human action, no solution of any problem in any department of human life, is wholly good or wholly evil. Good hides in the secret heart of evil, somewhere; as, alas! does evil in the deepest heart of good also. The purest joy leaves behind it an after-taste of some sorrow; and the worst pain bears within its womb the seed and the promise of some satisfaction.

सुखस्यानन्तरं दुःखं दुःखस्यानन्तरं सुखम् ॥

किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।

कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।

अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।

स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥—*Gītā*.

“What is right action, what is wrong action—even the wise are sorely perplexed to distinguish. He who sees each in the distant consequences of the other, and

real absence of action (absence of any real change in the aggregate total whole of the Universe) in both ultimately—as taught by the Final Knowledge—he alone sees well and truly, and he alone does all acts duly and with an even mind,” for he realises that the World-Process is essentially made up of सत् and असत्, of opposites of all kinds, that “it takes all kinds to make a world,” (wherefore “to understand all is to forgive all”), and that every one should diligently discharge his duty of the moment, the net total of world-activities remaining always the same.

Short of this Final and Total View, the perplexity is ever-present that “there are two sides to every question,” and that either side alternately acquires the greater importance according as we shift the limits of space and time and circumstance in considering consequences. In the course of nature, disadvantages are always meeting their “compensations” in advantages, and *vice versa*, everywhere. The fairest flowers spring from the foulest manures. The finest known living organism, the human, makes the most putrid and pestilential corpse. The saddest tragedy of an individual life makes the sweetest poetry for a whole people. The genius in one respect is a neuropath in another. The fools of this world are the wise of the next; and the successful here are not so successful hereafter. Where the outer life is rich, the inner is often poor; and public honours generally hide burning heart-hungers in the private life.

In Fiji, parents, when they become feeble with old age, are, or at least were till recently, killed and eaten up by their own children, as a religious duty, and by the insistent wish of the parents themselves. Horrible—from the civilised standpoint; a merciful release from the miseries of a helpless old age among a people that derive their livelihood almost exclusively from hunting and fishing, and a great “economic” and “biologic” advantage from the point of view of the tribe as a whole, in respect of “efficiency”.

What seems more harmless, nay, right and proper and indeed due, than to give alms to the poor? Yet economists tell us, and tell us not untruly, that in much almsgiving is hidden a potent encouragement to the vice of idle parasitism, and that charity, intended to relieve and diminish poverty, in the long run increases it and spreads it wider. The fifty lakhs of “professional mendicants” of the India of to-day are living testimony.

What duty of the sovereign seems clearer than to diffuse widely the benefits of “literacy”? Yet it is pointed out, and not altogether without good reason, that “literacy” (as distinguished from “education”) is not an unalloyed blessing; that even in the wider sense of education, predominantly literary studies unfit, rather than prepare, the ordinary man for many of the more objective pursuits of real life and the avocations that require physical activity; that the hostility, or at least incompatibility and

“disparity of temperament,” between “intellect” and “muscle,” “thought” and “action,” विद्या and कर्म, is irreconcilable in more senses than one; (ज्ञानकर्म-विरोधाच्च । *Muṇḍaka*, I, i, *Shāṅkara-Bhāṣhya*) ; that it is not every one who can benefit himself or the State by the reading and writing of books or journalistic articles; and that it is not useful, or wise, or even safe to force the वेद on the person who has not the nature of the द्विज.

Even so, what can be more undesirable, more horrible than War? Yet there are many writers at the present time who are loud in praise of it as an effectual check upon luxurious effeminacy, as a tonic, a stimulus, an awakener, a promoter of mental health and dormant energies and new arts and sciences and discoveries and inventions.

So far as *defensive* war is concerned, obviously none can gainsay its duty, its virtue, its heroism, its necessity.

द्राविमौ पुरुषौ राजन् सूर्यमण्डलभेदिनौ ।

योगी योगसमारूढः शूरश्च समरे हतः ॥—*Mahābhārata*.

ब्राह्मणार्थे गवार्थे वा देहत्यागोऽनुपस्कृतः ।

स्त्रीबालाभ्युपपत्तौ च बाह्यानां सिद्धिकारणम् ॥—*Manu*.

“Two souls, O king! pierce through the photosphere of the Sun and enter into Its Heart where is the abode of the Free—the soul of him who has achieved perfect Yoga, and the soul of the brave warrior who has fallen, face forwards, battling for a

just cause. To lay down life in righteous defence of women and children and the aged wise and the milch-cows that help to nourish the babies—this supreme sacrifice wins at one stroke the highest results of long-perfected Yoga and heavenly bliss for even the out-caste.”

It is true there are some who hold that even defensive war is not right, that it is better always to suffer wrong and resist not, *e.g.*, the followers of Count Tolstoy, the Doukhobortscoi of Russia, the original Bahāis of Persia, or, in a less extreme form, the Quakers; but Sanātana Dharma makes the right distinction and supplies the needed correction to this extreme doctrine by saying that it is true and due only for the Brāhmaṇa, and especially the Sannyāsī, and then too when the wrong is done to himself. Then it is right that he should “turn the other cheek”. For the householder, and yet more for the Kṣhattriya, and yet more when the wrong is done to a dependent, the doctrine is तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत, “Fight, then, O Arjuna!” Even the Brāhmaṇa and the hermit is enjoined to interfere in extreme cases, on pain of losing his high status :

ब्राह्मणः समदृक् शान्तो दीनानां समुपेक्षकः ।

स्रवते ब्रह्म तस्यापि भिन्नभाण्डात्पयो यथा ॥—*Bhāgavata*.

As regards *offensive* war, there is naturally much difference of opinion. Those who feel strong, and confident of their ability to conquer aggressively,

are loud in the praise of the duty of दिग्विजय, "world-conquest," "world-dominion". As Tulasī Dās says, समरथ के नहिं दोष गुसाई, herein translating the verse of the *Bhāgavata* :

धर्मव्यतिक्रमो दृष्ट ईश्वराणां च साहसम् ।

तेजीयसां न दोषाय बहेः सर्वभुजो यथा ॥

"The man of might will often flout the right quite recklessly ; the Fire-flame will devour everything and suffer not from indigestion."

But those whose lands and homes are being laid waste by the ruthless invader, whose kith and kin are being outraged and murdered before their eyes, they cannot but cry for heaven's curse upon the oppressor and upon all aggressive war. And the indefeasible law, ordained by the very Nature of the Universal Self, is that :

ईश्वरैरपि भोक्तव्यं कृतं कर्म शुभाशुभम् ।

"Even the mightiest must suffer to the full the appropriate consequences of their doings !" The cry of the weak is stronger than the sword of the tyrant. The sword cuts the body of the victim ; the cry fastens upon the soul of the wrong-doer with greater torture.

And so sick of this horrible slaughter that began with August 1914, and has now been going on in Europe for a year and a half nearly, and of the

tremendous waste of life and livelihood, are people by this time that, there is good reason to believe, the bulk of the populations of even the aggressive countries are wishing now for a cessation of hostilities; and many think—the wish being father to the thought—that this, the greatest of all wars of history, will be the last also, because of its so bitter lessons to all the nations, and that the millennium will follow close upon its ending.

If it be permissible and useful to add to the conjectures on this point, not idly but with a practical aim in view, we may perhaps make an attempt to find out the bearing of the principles of *Adhyātma-Vidyā* on the problem.

If there were concerned only the present mood of those who are not actually engaged in fighting, and who have therefore leisure for other than the actively martial emotions, the present mood of the mothers, the fathers, the wives, the children of the bread-winners who are fighting, on both sides, then there is little doubt but that they are all united in raising one continuous and passionate cry to the heavens, “O God! how long?” and there is little doubt also that the longed-for peace and शान्तिः would be re-established before long and more permanently than ever before. But, it is quite certain, it is not only this present mood, and of such only, that is concerned. Their other moods, *in potentia*, are also of account; as also the moods of others, who, themselves not actually fighting,



are yet actively helping on the War; and much more so, the passions of those who are actively fighting; and, finally, more important than all others, the last passions of those who have gone to the other worlds direct from the fields of battle or from the hospitals.

यं यं वापि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।

तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ॥—*Gītā*.

यच्चित्तस्तेनैष प्राणमायाति प्राणस्तेजसा युक्तः सहात्मना  
यथासंकल्पं लोकं नयति ॥—*Prashna*.

तदेव सक्तः सह कर्मणैति

लिङ्गं मनो यत्र निषक्तमस्य ।—*Bṛhad.* IV, iv, 6.

ॐ क्रतोः स्मर कृतं स्मर क्रतोः स्मर कृतं स्मर ॥—*Īsha*.

जीवः करणावसादे यास्यन् वृतो गच्छति भूतसूक्ष्मः ॥

—*Shankara-Dig-vijaya*.

These verses of the *Gītā*, and of its origins, the *Upaniṣhats*, state the superphysical law that seems to govern the problem. The passions of human beings, their greeds and jealousies, their lusts for “wine, women, wealth,” for “finery, flirtation, and fascination of men,” for “zar, zamin o zan”, their दारैषणा, वित्तैषणा, लोकैषणा, their consuming ambitions and rankling hatreds and undying wraths, as also their sublimely self-effacing compassions and devotions and sacrifices and quenchless yearnings to protect and help—in short their loves and hates with their countless

derivative emotions—these constitute the strong bonds which inescapably bind souls to each other, and form the electric wires along which plays the soul-force (their own essence), which unfailingly, exactly, accurately, brings about the adjustments of karmic consequences in pleasure and pain, by action and reaction, endlessly, between those souls, till the fire of the Final Realisation of the Unity of All gradually evaporates these passions and burns up the cords, and the electric wires fuse and the currents disappear in a Flash of Non-Separateness, and the souls are set free, by realising that there is none else who compels. But till then the play goes on. The motley troupe of actors, rogue-heroes and heroines, as well as angel-heroes and heroines, tangle themselves up with each other in marvellous complications, quite voluntarily, in this world-drama, under the guidance of their own self-chosen Leader, the Great Playwright—who is indeed the aggregate of themselves, their Oversoul, their Sūtrātmā, in whose Consciousness they all live and move and have their being. It is only when the Playwright and the players are tired of the play, the sport, the līlā, in which they have plunged and lost themselves, and recover fully the consciousness that it *is* all make-believe and fun and māyā—it is only then that the play ceases, for the time being, and the sleep of *pralaya* reigns instead. Love and War (in their infinite shades) are the only two *interests* of all this life-play; they are the very

substance and essence of the wires with which the Oversoul pulls the puppets of this Punch-and-Judy show to and fro; they are the only instruments of the law of Karma, and are invariably accompanied by their retributive coefficients of joy and sorrow, happiness and misery, triumph and mortification.

**सुखानुशयी रागः । दुःखानुशयी द्वेषः ॥—*Yoga-Sūtras*.**

According, then, as is "the ruling passion strong in death"—and only the passion that has ruled throughout life, or a strong reaction therefrom to its opposite which has been long maturing under the surface, thus having a good chance of being strong at the death also—such will be the rebirth of the departing soul, such its next appearance in the succeeding scene and act, in surroundings fitted to manifest that passion and its train of consequences. If any variety of the mood of love is in the ascendant at that supreme moment, then the next birth will be a loving one in an appropriate environment. If, however, any kind of hate prevails then, the consequent birth will be a hateful one also. In the words of the Upaniṣhats above quoted, the departing soul, in the moment of profound trance that precedes the actual severance from the last centre of life (some say in the heart, some in the brain, some in the navel,—all being connected by the Suṣhumnā, suggest others in reconciliation, उदरमुपासते य ऋषिवर्त्मसु कर्पदशः *etc.*, *Bhāgavata*) "reviews

its whole past life and sums it up, saying to itself, 'Remember thy prevailing motive, thy ruling passion, to which all else of thy life was subordinated,' and then departs to the other world, with its subtle organisms and faculties, (its biophorids and determinants, re-arranged like the coloured pieces of glass in a kaleidoscope, in a new adjustment, a new seed of a new life), to manifest in a new birth in this world in due time."

Now if there be any truth in these views, their bearing on the problem before us, *viz.*, What are the probable results of this War on the future history of the human race, is obvious; but, also, it is no more and no less easy to state these results clearly than it is to describe positively the emotional conditions of the combatants and the non-combatants involved, individually, and in the mass.

How many of the nations concerned crave for self-aggrandisement at the expense of others, as one openly does for **एकछत्रता**, Universal Sovereignty, for World-Dominion, for the opportunity of imposing its own super-eminent culture and type of civilisation on all the others? Does any one, do most, of the nations and countries sincerely think of self-sacrifice, pure and simple? How many of them are maintaining a keen eye on the main chance of a substantial share in the spoils? How many of the souls that are being deprived of their bodies violently and are flinging them away lavishly—how

many of these pass into the other worlds with thoughts of "peace on earth and good-will amongst men," and how many in frenzies of wrath and bitterness, or terror and despair, or burning hate and maddening horror?

In times, places, and circumstances, like those which enframe the previous Great War, of the *Mahābhārata*, while no doubt the psychological causes of the war were the same as in this case—inordinate land-hungers, immense jealousies, haughty arrogance and pride of power, and reckless lusts of all kinds—yet also there was present, permeating the whole intellectual, emotional and physical atmosphere of *Bhārata-Varṣha*, the thought of, and the aspiration towards, and the working for, other and better worlds, the active and wishful recognition of other births, of the superiority of the spiritual over the material, of the superphysical over the physical. And, thus, most of the warriors, even while they slew each other, felt not unfriendly in their hearts, and, while regretting the circumstances which had made war inevitable, also took it as *Kṣhatṭriya*-duty, and as not altogether unpleasant *Kṣhatṭriya* occupation; to use the modern phrase, took it all as "good sport," in "the sporting spirit". The confession of *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* is typical:

जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः

जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः ।

केनापि देवेन हृदि स्थितेन  
यथा नियुक्तोऽस्मि तथा करोमि ॥

“I know the right and yet I cannot do it. I know the wrong and yet may not avoid it. As by some god hidden within the heart, I feel compelled and helplessly I act.” Duryodhana himself and his allies all well knew that his cause was wrong, and made no excuses and put forward no sophistries and moral myths—but quite frankly admitted they were wrong and fought for the sake of fighting. It has also to be borne in mind that only the Kṣhatriya population took part in the war, and not the vast bulk of the rest, the men of learning, the men of trade and industry, and the men of service.

The result of this state of things was that the actors concerned recognised that they were only actors in a divine drama; and so, after the play was over and the war ended, comparatively little bitterness was left behind, and the subsequent peace on earth was a substantial one and lasted for a great many generations, and the warrior-souls from both sides also met together in the heaven-worlds on terms of the most cheerful friendship and were very far from anxious to return early to this planet of sorrows—if we are to believe the *Mahābhārata* narratives. Do the soldiers of this Greater War possess similar souls?

If any such superphysical, *i.e.*, emotional and intellectual conditions are largely prevalent to-day

also, in Europe, as were in Mahābhārata India, then the result will be similar too. We may remember that the proportion of the forces of Good and Evil, which was as seven to eleven akṣhauhiṇīs (great army corps, numbering two hundred and eighteen thousand and seven hundred fighting men, each, besides elephants, horses, chariots, drivers of these and sub-servants) at the beginning of that war, was changed at the end of it to seven to three (surviving individuals). But if the conditions are different, the result must be different. Many speculations are afloat that inasmuch as the soldiers are fighting and dying for an exceedingly noble cause, their souls are perforce befitted to promote the purposes of and to help to create and share in the longed-for millennium of universal peace and prosperity. But the relation of cause and effect is very far from clear here. A twofold perplexity confronts us. Each party believes its cause to be just and noble; and the cause, in either case, is, not universal co-operation and federation and peace, but "resistance to aggression and to curtailment of existing power" on the one side, and the (so-alleged) "necessity to expand, for a place in the sun, for room to stand in, *etc.*," in other words, "resistance to limitation of growth of power," on the other. In short, "the ruling passion strong in death" is not mutual help, but mutual resistance. Such a mood as cause—and the dying mood of great masses of human beings is a tremendously potent psychical or

superphysical force and cause, as said above—is apparently and most unfortunately not likely to lead to a millennium as effect.

Besides the immediate motives and passions of the War, we have also to bear in mind the present widespread condition of cynicism, irreligion and matterward pre-occupation of souls, ever craving for the secular life of sense, and ignoring, even when not positively scouting, all notions of other lives and other worlds. Under such conditions, it is obvious that the souls of most of the slaughtered, suddenly and agonisingly torn from their physical vehicles while in the fullest vigour of manhood, are not likely to be capable of appreciating the in-turned life and experiences of the *pitr-loka* and the *svarga-loka*, and are therefore not ready to pass on to them; but must be hovering about restlessly in the intermediate grey world of the *preta-loka* subdivisions of the *Bhū-loka*, obsessing and inciting the living combatants and eagerly seeking opportunity to take birth again as soon as may be. It would be very helpful in furthering psychical science, though by no means quite safe, if the members of the Psychical Research Society could make experiments at the present time with their mediums, and endeavoured to communicate with the war-slaughtered departed.

As the *Jyotiṣha-Shāstra* says, after the expiration of the twenty-years' cycle of Rudra, the Destroyer, there will follow the twenty-years' cycle of Brahmā,



the Creator, when there will probably be a multiplication which will more than make up for the present destruction.

The important question is as to the quality of these multiplying numbers. If all the souls that have gone over come back with an enhanced violence of passion and martial ardour, then again after another forty or fifty years when the Brahmā and Viṣṇu cycles have run their course and the rotation of time brings round the sway of Rudra, the world may have to endure the agonies of an even worse war. (Otherwise, Rudra would put on the aspect of Shiva, and in place of violent destruction we should have peaceful renunciation, to satisfy cyclic requirements).

And there are further complications to be taken account of. We are told that hate is, if possible, an almost stronger bond than love. The souls of the dying combatants, with their mental gaze fixed upon the "other," the "enemy," rather than upon their own side, are very likely to pass over, at the next rebirth, into the physical bodies of this "other" and "enemy" nation, and actuated by the hidden samskāra-instinct of hostility thereto, to become sources of internal and internecine discord there. Thinkers are not wanting who say that if this *military* war of the nations had not arisen, an even more radically destructive *economic* war would have broken out very shortly *within the limits* of almost every great nation; that all the signs were set to the event

of an ubiquitous civil strife due to the intense and growing rivalries of industrialism and commercialism, (to say nothing of oppositions of trade-unionism and capitalism, socialism and conservatism, *etc.*), which would have been even more ruinous than is this War caused by the mad race of armaments and the jealousies of army and navy ; that it is a false notion that industrialism is the divine panacea against the instincts that make for war ; that as a knife in the hands of a schoolboy produces an irresistible itching to cut something, so armies and navies in the hands of nations produce an itching to fight and justify their existence and achieve their destiny ; and, *even so*, the existence and multiplication of factorial machinery (महायन्त्र, as distinguished from hand-machines, लघुयन्त्र) produces an itching for over-production and consequent competitive struggle and economic disaster ; the huge machines invented to serve men, become their masters and insist on being worked incessantly for the livelihood of the producers, even when the consumers *do not* want the produce ; the jinn, the Frankenstein monster, evoked for slavery, becomes a relentless and insatiable tyrant who insists on being fed perpetually, on pain of eating up the magician himself ; and so, ultimately, the producers and the consumers consume each other, by trade-wars and their consequence, *viz.*, civil war, the international military war being, at bottom, the outcome of the international commercial strife.

The hopes which some entertain, of a universal peace based on the increase of factorial industrialism stimulated by the lessons of this War, therefore, require to be revised in the light of matter-of-fact and even, so to say, commonplace considerations, to say nothing of superphysical "far-fetchings"—which "far-fetched" considerations, by the way, are *very* near and not far-fetched at all, to those who believe that there are souls as well as bodies, that these souls take birth again and again under certain laws, clearly recognisable by us, and that our inner desires and motives shape our outer life and culture.

Page after page of history repeats the same tale; only the names are new. Egyptian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Persian, Hebrew, Mongolian, Roman, Greek, Peruvian, Mexican, and countless other civilisations and cultures were born, grew up, and, in their prime, conquered other effete and senile and "inferior" races; and in their turn, grew effete and senile and inferior, from a variety of causes—seldom sheer old age, often the "diseases" of moral corruption and consequent loss of physical and intellectual vigour, or the "accidents" of mutual mutilation by wars, *etc.* The remnants of these ancient civilisations have become the barbarous or savage races. Sociologists recognise two kinds of savages, the "primitives" and the "degenerates". The majority of the "inferior" races of to-day are of the second kind, having been "superiors" in their day.

For every nation has its day. And there is reason to believe that the souls, inhabiting these "inferior" bodies—the souls themselves being, so to say, young, ungrown, undeveloped, nearer as yet to the animal kingdom, though the bodies are "old" and effete (in the national sense)—after the conquest and after the extermination of their bodies by the "superiors," with their dying thoughts full of these "superiors" and passionately desiring vengeance, are born amongst these same "superiors" as their slum population, their apaches and hooligans, their sundowners and hoboës, their tramps and congenital criminals, or, if somewhat advanced to a higher stage, as the "labouring classes," who are no longer willing to labour on terms of absolute obedience (किंकर - शूद्र), are but always ready, and often actually able, seriously to dislocate and mangle the limbs of the social organism by means of strikes and revolutions and rebellions and civil wars. Who knows how many souls of the African and American indigenous races may not be now reappearing on both sides in the Great War, intensifying the animosities and cruelties, and giving greater vividness to the drama of rewards and punishments for past "national" deeds, and working them out in "national" or *Sūtrātmika* triumphs and defeats, elations and depressions?

If such ideas have any truth in them, then it follows that the prospects are very far from strong of universal peace and goodwill after the

exhaustion of even this horrible War. Instead of one "balance of power," one point of equilibrium of forces, one line of neutralisation of opposites, one European problem, there will probably crop up two, or three, or half-a-dozen such, in the different continents, politically, and one or more within the limits of every country, economically and socially—*under present conditions of political and industrial thought and feeling*. For now, as ever, hatred ceaseth not by hatred but by love alone; unless righteousness be achieved, admission into the kingdom of heaven is not possible; and unless the *whole spirit*, the *whole outlook upon life*, of the civilised peoples, is changed, and the whole of society reorganised anew *upon a deliberately spiritual and psychological basis*, any real improvement will be impossible, and history will remain in reality what writers up till recently have made it out to be by a just instinct, *i.e.*, the history mainly of drums and trumpets, mutual hate and mutual injury, rather than a progressive and well-balanced development on the triple line of science, art and commerce, of cognition, desire and action.

To ask any one such questions as the following, *viz.*, "What should be our international policy after the war?" "what should be our industrial policy?" "what should be our educational policy?" *etc.*, and to ask it with exclusion of reference to the other questions, is like asking "what should be our policy with regard to

the hands and feet ? ” or “ the head,” or “ the stomach,” exclusively. To take account of only one—independently of the others—is fatal. Only when the *whole* nature of man is duly understood, can each or any portion of it be safely and satisfactorily provided for. Only when the life and history and requirements and future goal of the whole international human race is duly understood in broad outlines, as *it can be* in the light of, and only of, Adhyātma-vidyā—only then can each and any nation and any department of the national life of each and any such be at all adequately safeguarded. All these questions, all these problems, must be studied and solved together, with reference to and in the light of each other. Otherwise they will not be understood and solved at all. Otherwise, every nation will always be hustling or being hustled by every other; every department of the life of a community be at daggers drawn with every other; and the lack of proper *balancing* will ever increasingly exacerbate the incompatibility and conflict, between head, heart, and limbs, between science, art and trade, between reason, emotion, and conduct, between theory, ideal, and practice.

The main types of culture and systems of civilisation dealt with by history may, in terms of psychology, be characterised as Brāhmaṇa-rājyam, Kṣhatriya-rājyam, Vaishya-rājyam, and Shūdra-rājyam, the reigns of the intellectuals, the musculars, the

commercials, and of the mob. In their better aspects they correspond respectively with Satya-Yuga (the higher socialism), Tretā (patriarchal despotism), Dvāpara (republicanism) and Kali (individualism); in their worse aspects, with that sacerdotalism, feudalism, commercialism, and lower socialism or mob-rule, which have been replacing one another in Europe during the last two thousand years—speaking in terms of the broadest outlines—as the preceding one became enfeebled by its own excesses and corruptions, and so stimulated the succeeding one. But in reality there is no greater (if no less) incompatibility between these four or rather three main types (the fourth not being a “system” or a “culture” at all, but mostly only “confused struggle” and “chaos”), than there is between the three factors of mind, or the three systems (nervous, muscular, and assimilative) of the body. The principles and the ideals of the old Varṇa Dharma and Āshrama-Dharma must be studied and mastered by statesmen and rulers, if they would understand how such a reconciliation between incongruous-seeming elements, functions, and types, can be brought about, and how any lasting peace on earth and goodwill amongst men can be established, by giving to *each* its due—and *not more than due*—share of *work* and share of *remuneration* for that work, and so establishing that *just proportion* and balance between all the fundamental elements and organs of the social whole which only can

minimise the bitterness of internecine jealousy, promote healthy emulation, and ensure a long and healthy life.

The natural psycho-physical differences in the qualities and the temperaments of men must be recognised; men must be assigned to corresponding broad classes accordingly, in a just, living, and elastic system; the "labour," the work of the community, must be divided amongst these classes appropriately (चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः । says the *Gītā*, by गुण and कर्म, not mere जन्म), and equally appropriate remuneration provided (surplus *honour* to one class, surplus *power* to another, surplus *wealth* to a third, and healthy and sufficient food, clothing and housing to all); and the domestic life, the dietary and sex-relations, and the population-question, and the education and training and disciplining of the individual—these must be looked after and adjusted and elevated first and foremost of all. And then the rest, the solutions of all the other problems that vex modern man, will follow of themselves. And the at present equally disturbed conditions of the superphysical worlds, (which are inseparably interconnected with the physical, in an endless chain of cause and effect), will also readjust themselves as soon as things here begin to be mended; and jīvas of different temperaments and qualifications will begin to take to themselves bodies in families that, differentiated by due "cultivation" and "breeding," have become specially fitted to give scope for the manifestation



of those temperaments and qualifications ; and then only, the bitternesses and rivalries (at present rampant because everybody wants everything in the absence of a recognised assignment of appropriate remunerations) having ceased, there will come about the true and the much-longed-for millennium.

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।

परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥—*Gītā*.

But have you not said that love and war are the only two interests of life ? Do you now hope to abolish war by some Utopian and impossible reorganisation of society ?

The answer to this query must at once be that hopes of an *everlasting* peace and an unchecked progress are vain. Under modern materialistic conditions, the "progress" of the last fifty years of the civilised nineteenth century A.D. and since, has been naturally marked by a big war almost every alternate year, Crimean, American North against South, Russo-Turkish, Franco-Prussian, Anglo-Afghan, Anglo-Burman, Chino-Japanese, Chinese Legation, Hispano-American, Greeko-Turkish, Anglo-Boer, Russo-Japanese, Turko-Balkan, Turko-Italian, and now the Greatest War of all—to say nothing of the incessant minor fightings and harryings going on, on various Asiatic frontiers, in Africa, and amongst the South American Republics. But even with other conditions, we may not expect to abolish war altogether.

Science and Philosophy unite in telling us that the worlds and their inhabitants swing ceaselessly between birth on the one hand and death on the other, between evolution and dissolution, between joy and sorrow. The Primal Error, अविद्या, of Individualised and Separate Life, अहंकार, the subjective counterpart of what objectively becomes तृष्णा and बुभुक्षा, the hunger and thirst of the body, the deepest and acutest need thereof, necessarily involves, as the next outgrowth, both love and hate, co-operation and competition, *alliance for existence* as well as *struggle for existence*, for self-preservation in body, and in progeny. (cf. अविद्याऽस्मितारागद्वेषाभिनिवेशाः पञ्चक्लेशाः ॥ *Yoga-Sūtrās*, and the *Gītā* comments thereon ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः, etc.) राग and द्वेष are indeed inseparable, so much so that Kṛṣṇa declares that कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते । “Aversion arises in the vicinity of Desire.” (अभितः जायते). To draw nearer to one is to draw further away from others, in the regions of the limited. And no nation has, so far in history, found it possible to make an *alliance* with one except with reference to at least *possible war* against another. Civilised, and uncivilised, man is always essaying to abolish pains and discomforts and enhance pleasures and multiply luxuries. By a metaphysical, and therefore physical, law of the Nature of the Supreme, his efforts are being always frustrated. Every new discovery or invention looks at the first blush like “the Philosophers’ Stone” that will turn all baser

metals into gold, promises to be the very "Elixir of Life" that will confer eternal youth and life immortal on the physical body. Later experience sadly proves that if there *are* some gains, there are equally clearly, and quite as many, corresponding pains. If on a level plain we wish to raise a tall tower, we may do so at any given spot. But a corresponding deep depression will have to be made in some other spot on the plain, to provide the material with which to build the tower. Evolution is differentiation. The general "low standard of life," the uniform "dull level" of feeling, of an agricultural and pastoral community, when differentiated out into the complexities of a "mechanical" civilisation, breaks up into a "very high standard of life"—for a comparative few, and a "very much lower one"—for the comparative many. The miseries of the miners, the mill-workers, the factory-hands, the engine-stokers, the sweated wage-earners; the endless new diseases born of the conditions of life in overcrowded cities; the lead-poisoning, the phosphorus-corroding, the gas-and-soot-and-smoke-asphyxiating, and the destructive action of dazzling lights and maddening noises and ever-rushing electricity on the nervous system; the crushing effect on the mind and its vehicle, the body, of the simultaneous application of the extreme sense-stimulations and temptations of crowded cities and of the social and legal penal restraints—all these are the well-known price that have to be paid

by the many for the luxuries of a few, which few also are, at bottom, far from happy, and, indeed, apart from the pleasure of pride, are most restlessly unhappy by their own confession; though the pleasure of pride is great, no doubt, for it has in it the "taste," the रस, of अहंकार "egoism"; which "egoism" is the primal root-appetite for individualised and separate being, and includes the other main appetites of hunger and sex, and, in Purāṇic symbology, is appropriately presided over by Bhava-Ruḍra as deity; so that the रस of अहंकार is the basis of all other रस's, and gives rise, (a) in the sātṭvika form, to the magnanimous grandeurs of uttermost self-contenance and self-sacrifice of the body for the sake of divine joys, (b) in the rājasa form, to the self-respect of wedded life and good citizenship, for the satisfactions of this world, and (c) in the tāmasa form, to the arrogant gloatings of rape and murder for lust and food and plunder, which are inseparable from the hell of War and the over-materialistic life—all three being, alas! inextricably mixed up with each other, in every soul, each prevailing over the others by turns.

रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत ।

रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥—*Gītā*.

The effort, then, to annihilate pain and perpetuate pleasure, has always been and ever must continue to be futile—in terms of matter as well as in terms of

psyche. In the language of the philosophers and psychologists, the two are *relative* to each other. Even if it were possible for every human being to become a multi-millionaire, for every nation to become possessed of the "largest" army, the "strongest" navy, the "richest" commerce, the "broadest" territory, the "most numerous" population—contradiction in terms, "every" and "superlative"!—as soon as this pious end was attained, every body and every nation would cease to feel any pleasure in the fact—because pleasure is *being more than another*, being *better off than before*, is the co-efficient of वृद्धि, and, *per contra*, because, as the Persian saying is, "marg-i-amboh jashne dāraḍ," "the death of a large host is a festivity," and pain, which is being less than another and worse off than before, loses its sting and ceases to be pain when the *comparison* vanishes.

What is to be done, then? On the one hand we are asked to believe that war is horrible; on the other that it is inevitable! What is to be done? The answer is plain. The effort *must* ever continue to be made to reduce sorrows and increase the general happiness.

मृत्युना सह योद्धव्यं यावद्बुद्धिबलोदयम् ।

We must war against war and death while mind and strength last. Even to continue to live in the fleshly body is to make such effort. Only it ought to be made with due recognition of inevitable

and fundamental facts. So it will be saner, soberer, perhaps more effective. If the troupe of actors enacted their parts in the drama with consciousness of the fact that they were "playing," some intense sorrows would be saved—if also perhaps some correspondingly intense joys be lost. In any case the angel-heroes ought to "recognise," ought to "know better," even if the "rogue-heroes" are prevented from doing so by the conditions of their part!

And so, while recognising that war is not to be abolished outright without abolishing peace and law also, we may yet, after this present terrible climax of all wars, hope and strive for at least a *long spell* of peace, *if* a great reactionary *change of spirit* does come over mankind and sympathies replace the antipathies that have brought about this universal conflict.

If the "superior" races—undoubtedly superior in material science and all the resources of the physical life, but, unfortunately for mankind, not equally superior in spiritual wisdom—would agree to sink their sense of material superiority underneath true spiritual humility, would cease from exploiting the "inferior" races, however much the latter deserve it for their sins, would give them their rights while taking their own just dues, would not only live, but also let live, as is the very spirit of Manu's Scheme, and would wash and purify their

hearts with tears of deep repentance and earnest prayer, and make great public vows to work for the good of all rather than of each self, to organise the whole human race as Manu did, and subserviently thereto reorganise the whole domestic, social, industrial and political life of each nation, on the basis of the laws and facts of *Adhyātma-vidyā*, Spiritual Psychology; and would reduce their *over-high* standard of individual physical living, and assign appropriate remuneration for each kind of work, giving surplus honour to the man of life-illuminating thought, surplus power to the man of life-protecting action, surplus wealth to the man of life-enriching industry and art, and assuring healthy food and clothing and housing to *all*, the unskilled labourer as well as the three others; then they would surely find their standards of *spiritual* living and their levels of *inner* happiness as well as their standards of communal *physical* living, *i.e.*, *national* possessions, upraised very high, automatically, and their international as well as class and individual jealousies and hatreds and bitternesses and haughtinesses replaced by sympathy and helpfulness and affection, and a new civilisation would grow up which would outshine all previous ones in poetry and beauty and peacefulness of life—if not in the splendours of mechanical restlessness and the transports of alternating triumphs and defeats—a civilisation which would embody the poet's dream of a Federation of the World.

But this is possible only if the "ideals" and "motives" of life are revised radically and made to accord with the sage counsels of the Upaniṣhats :

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ।

एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ॥

यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद्विजानतः ।

तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ॥

"Enjoy the good things of life, the blessings that the gods, the individualised nature-forces, have provided. But enjoy them with aloofness, with detachment, with readiness to resign at a moment's notice; and ever maintain consciousness of the Unity and Universality of the Self. Only so can Spiritual Joy be found in the life of matter; otherwise, the fetters of misery." The leaders, the upper classes, of the nations, have to set the example of living as the Upaniṣhat counsels, *in* but not as *of* the world, an example of true regeneracy, द्विजता, to the proletariat—if a long era of peaceful happiness for mankind is desired.

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।

"As the superiors behave, so will the inferiors."

There is some reason to hope, judging from the more thoughtful writings in western books and periodicals, that such a change of spirit, change of heart, change of ideals, is coming on the nations, and



*may* be completed by this War. After its surfeit and exhaustion of evil emotions and forces, the better mind of humanity may have a better chance of reconstruction along more permanently peaceful lines. Different pieces of metal, if they are to be welded together, have all to be *heated* strongly first. Providence is perhaps employing this method to effect the welding together of the great nations. In this hope we live.

And even if this hope be not realised soon, but be deferred to a distant future, then for the near future too we may take some consolation for the sharp agonies and the massive distresses of the combatants and their countries. There is little to fear that this war will be prosecuted so relentlessly on both sides, to the proverbial "last drop of blood of the last man," as to wipe out European civilisation and make it "reel back into the beast". The probability is that peace will be agreed upon before very long. And, then, with all its vast destruction of life and property, its lusts of murder and rapine, and their evil consequences, the war cannot but have some good after-effects also, in the births of the next generations. The intense longings and yearnings of betrothed lovers, and married pairs, and parents and children, and brothers and sisters, and dearly beloved friends, so cruelly separated by the war, and the patriotically ardent and heroic or religious-minded and resigned self-sacrifices of thousands upon thousands, cannot but have the

most beautiful consequences for these souls, in the subtler *post mortem* worlds, and, again, in their next births here.

आचार्यो ब्रह्मलोकेशः प्राजापत्ये पिता प्रभुः ।

अतिथिस्त्विन्द्रलोकेशो देवलोकस्य चर्त्विजः ॥

जामयोऽप्सरसां लोके वैश्वदेवस्य बान्धवाः ।

संबन्धिनो ह्यपां लोके पृथिव्यां मातृमातुलौ ॥

आकाशेशास्तु विज्ञेया बालवृद्धकृशातुराः ।

एभिर्जितैश्च जयति सर्वान् लोकानिमान् गृही ॥

—*Manu*, IV., 181—184.

“The teacher is lord of the Brahma-loka and can give entrance into it, love and service of the father leads to Prajāpati’s heaven, of the guest to Indra’s, of the sacrificing priest to the Devas’, of the sisters and the daughters to the region of the apsaras, of kinsfolk to that of the Vaishvaḍevas, of relatives by marriage to the world of (Varuṇa, the lord of the) waters, of the mother and the maternal uncle to this earth, and of the aged, the feeble and the sick to the regions of Ākāśa (ruled by the Sun).” That is to say, as Spirit has for co-efficient Matter, and soul finds expression in body, generally, so, more particularly, special moods of mind manifest in special modes of matter, perception in the afferent nerves and the sensories, volition in the afferent ones and the muscles, emotion in the ganglia and the glands, and again, by further

subdivision, vision in the eyeball, audition in the ear, and so forth; and as different individual tastes and temperaments, even here on this earth, gravitate to corresponding appropriate "worlds" for their satisfaction (while remaining in touch with each other also), *e.g.*, to the "world" of the home, or the club, or the theatre, the music-hall, the art-gallery, the "world" of the mountain-climbers, or the sculptors, or the gardeners, the scientific associations, the bankers, the shippers; or as even within a single homestead the place for the full manifestation of the parental-filial affection in the nursery, for the fraternal-social the drawing-room, for the conjugal the bedroom, even so, on a larger scale, in the subtler worlds are there subdivisions corresponding to the "characters" of souls. And the tremendous stress of the war forces into development fine characters as well as foul; and these fine characters have their appropriate place in the heaven-worlds and again on this earth, after rebirth.

The heroic courage, the martial prowess, the mechanical invention, the scientific acumen, the military and naval and aerial skill, the magnificent manhood and womanhood, developed here and matured in the subtler worlds (side by side, no doubt, with cruel ruthlessness and abnormal criminality and devilry of all kinds) will all add to the richness, the intensity, the poetry (and also the dangerousness) of human life in the succeeding generations. And

literature and science of all kinds (psychic science a fair share, let us hope) should also receive a great stimulus.

In respect of literature, it has been said that modern warfare offers no scope for the operation of the poetic faculty. This is scarcely so. Rather it may be said that, for the time, scientific faculty has perhaps outrun the poetic faculty—because the general interest in the former has overpowered interest in the latter. Given the necessary chance, the latter will again overtake the former before long, and the human race may evolve a greater Epic out of this war than the *Mahābhārata* or the *Iliad*, even though perhaps it may be written in prose and not in verse. The tremendous manœuvres of iron-clad ocean-leviathans, the swift flights of the giant airships, the rush of the lighter aeroplanes, the thunders of mammoth cannon, the vast operations of millions of soldiers stretching in line upon line over hundreds, even thousands, of miles, the sheets of liquid fire, the hurricanes of shrieking shells and smaller missiles, the clouds of stifling gas—all wielded by human beings; the gathering to the main theatres of war, of soldiers of almost all the main etheric types and races from vast distances and all the continents; and the thousand individual deeds of astonishing valour, miraculous endurance of pain, and extreme self-sacrifice, throwing past classical episodes into the shade; the financial throes of half

the human race; the sympathetic agitations and disturbances and minor conflicts on all the other continents and all the seas;—all these, with their deep-lying biological, psychological and moral causes in the past, and their consequences in the future, are material worthy of the high poetic genius and the deep historical and philosophical insight of as great a Kavi-R̥shi as Vyāsa himself. Such an epic might well sum up within itself the essence of all past literature and be the illuminative scripture of many generations to come, pending the arrival of that happy time—indicated in the *Mahābhārata* in the description of the Uṭṭara-Kurus—when there are no more castes or classes, or sovereign or subject, for faculties have been perfected and none need be dependent on another, and lawlessness has vanished, and therefore every one is a law unto himself, and wisdom is at flow and error is at ebb, and heaven is nearly reached on earth.

Such may be our more immediate hopes. But over and above the consolation of all such temporal hopes is the consolation of the Eternal Assurance, to those who have caught a glimpse, however faint and passing, of the changeless at the heart of the changeful, the assurance that all possible experiences of pain and pleasure, and all possible worlds in which such experiences are set, are all within the Consciousness of the Living Spirit, and not that Spirit in them. From that standpoint, however overwhelming

externally, at the moment, the vast agony of this war, it is in reality but a passing irritation in the earth's (*i.e.*, our own), æonic consciousness, less than a ripple on the ocean's surface. Or, better still, we may regard it as a deliberately planned small scene in the Endless Drama, wherein Avatāras are the most highly-evolved and most deeply differentiated and distinguished (and therefore seemingly most acutely ahaṅkārika, though at heart ahaṅkāra-less because knowingly make-believe) actors, whose sole business is to make the life of the more homogeneous-minded mass more interesting, and to relieve the tedium and monotony of their daily round by filling it with extraordinary thrills and sensations, pangs and ecstasies, making pretext of the world's need for adjustments of the consequences of great national and racial crimes and misdemeanours, and incidentally expiating their own grand sins in a grand way, newly to point a moral and adorn a tale !

The *Purāṇas* leave no room for doubt on these points. All the Avatāras and their inevitable counter-Avatāras, the Angel-heroes and the rogue-heroes, are selected out of the same band of jīva-actors by the great Stage-Manager and *Primus inter pares*, Viṣṇu among his *pārshadas*, all brothers and step-brothers and first cousins ; and they begin the play by deliberately sinning against and offending and then cursing and dooming each other whenever they get cloyed with the age-long joys of heaven and begin to crave for the

faster life of this grosser world and its more bitter and hot and pungent tastes of *rajas* and *tamas*, as a change. Hiranyākṣha and Hiranyakasipu and Rāvaṇa and Śiśupāla were the grandest and most imposing figures of their day—with the single exception of their own chief, Varāha, Narasiṃha, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa. They are all mere names now ; and perhaps because their stories were fading or were not so well known to the newer nations of the west, this new scene has been planned by Providence, first rehearsed in heaven and then acted out on earth, in order to bring home to men anew the lessons of war and peace, love and hate, pravṛtti and nivṛtti, frantic pursuit and calm renunciation, as a preparation towards the Great Peace.

दृष्ट्वात्मनि जये व्यग्रान् नृपान् हसति भूरियम् ।  
 अहो मां विजिगीषन्ति भृत्यो क्रीडनका नृपाः ॥  
 यां विसृज्यैव मनवस्तत्सुताश्च कुरुद्वह ।  
 गता यथागतं युद्धे तां मां जेष्यन्त्यबुद्धयः ॥  
 मत्कृते पितृपुत्राणां भ्रातृणां चापि विग्रहः ।  
 जायते ह्यसतां राज्ये ममताबद्धचेतसाम् ॥  
 ममैवेयं मही कृत्स्ना न ते मूढेतिवादिनः ।  
 स्पर्धमाना मिथो घ्नन्ति म्रियन्ते मत्कृते नृपाः ॥  
 पृथुः पुरुरवा गाधिर्नहुषो भरतोऽर्जुनः ।  
 मान्धाता सगरो रामः खट्वाङ्गो धुन्धुहा रघुः ॥  
 तृणबिन्दुर्ययातिश्च शर्यातिः शन्तनुर्गयः ।  
 भगीरथः कुवल्याश्वः ककुत्स्थो नैषधो नृगः ॥

हिरण्यकशिपुर्वृत्रो रावणो लोकरावणः ।  
 नमुचिः शम्बरो भौमो हिरण्याक्षोऽथ तारकः ॥  
 अन्ये च बहवो दैत्या राजानो ये महेश्वराः ।  
 सर्वे सर्वविदः शूराः सर्वे सर्वजितोऽजिताः ॥  
 ममतां मय्यवर्तन्त कृत्वोच्चैर्मर्त्यधर्मिणः ।  
 कथावशेषाः कालेन ह्यकृतार्थाः कृता विभो ॥  
 कथा इमास्ते कथिता महीयसां विताय लोकेषु यशः  
 परेयुषाम् ।  
 विज्ञानवैराग्यविवक्षया विभो वचो विभूतीर्न तु  
 पारमार्थ्यम् ॥

यस्तूत्तमश्लोक गुणानुवादः सङ्गीयतेऽभीक्ष्णममङ्गलघ्नः ।  
 तमेव नित्यं शृणुयादभीक्ष्णं कृष्णेऽमलां भक्तिमभीप्समानः॥

—*Bhāgarata*, XII, iii.

दुरधिगमात्मतत्त्वनिगमाय तवात्ततनोः  
 चरितमहामृताब्धिपरिवर्त्तपरिश्रमणाः ।  
 न परिलषन्ति केचिदपवर्गमपीश्वर ते  
 चरणसरोजहंसकुलसंगविसृष्टगृहाः॥—*Ibid.* X, lxxxvii.

“The earth beholds men fighting for her sake  
 and cries: Aho! these witless puppets of death are  
 struggling to wrest me from each other and make  
 me their own, me whom the Manus themselves with  
 their sons have left behind! Alas! that for my sake  
 father and son, brother and brother, should grow  
 selfish, greedy, vicious and slay each other. The  
 maddened ones say unto each other: This whole



Earth is mine, mine only; and then they both die, and I am neither's. Pr̥thu the Paternal, from whom I draw my name of Pr̥thvī, who was my first lord and master and brought to birth from me my hidden treasures of food-grains, fruits and mineral wealth abundant, Purūravā the Beautiful, Nahusha the Proud, Bharata the magnificent, Kārtavīrya Arjuna the Warrior, Māṇdhātā the Mighty, Rāma the Noble, Yayāti the Luxurious, Kakūṣṭha the Imperial, Bhagīratha the Beneficent, Shantanu the Healer, Nrga the Generous; Hiranyakasipu the Hard, Hiranyāksha the Tremendous, Vṛtra the Grand, Shambara the Magician, Rāvaṇa the world-shaker—all great kings of the Āryas, the Daityas, the Rākshasas; and countless other restless ones who thought themselves sovereigns of high degree, omniscient, omnipotent, all-conquering—they all projected 'mine'-ness on to me with clinging, forgetting their frail mortal make; and all have been devoured by time before their unfulfillable wishes could be fulfilled.

"Thus laughs the Earth, scornful and sad, over the error of the "great ones," that are but as worms upon her surface if they cling to her and look not up Above. And I have called their stories to thy mind only to lead it to renunciation and the Wisdom of the Spirit wherein alone is Peace. Where high converse is held of Him whose every name and every act of glorious fame is Holy Writ, by the very sound of which all ills

shall fall away, there only is the permanent abode of Love, Wisdom and Peace.

“Only in order that the Truth of thine own essence, Ātman ! might be known of men who see not inwards easily, hast Thou put on these many glorious Forms behind which they might recognise Thy Radiance with lesser dazzlement. Yet, O Beautiful Magician ! such is the overpowering fascination of these Forms themselves that even the seers find their gaze enthralled and chained by the red lotuses that spring up and float upon the Spatial waters wherever Thy White Swan-footsteps fall with mystic majesty, and have almost forgot their primal quest for Liberation ! Thou only, Spirit of the Universe ! canst release us from the bonds of Thine own Mâyā !”

ओं

सर्वस्तरतु दुर्गाणि सर्वो भद्राणि पश्यतु ।

सर्वः सद्बुद्धिमाप्नोतु सर्वत्र नन्दतु ॥

ओं



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Psychic and Spiritual  
Development

BY

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# Psychic and Spiritual Development<sup>1</sup>

To speak properly, the title of my lecture should be "Psychic Development and Spiritual Unfolding". That would have made rather too long a title, and yet the difference between the words "development" and "unfolding" is a very important one. When we are dealing with the Spirit we cannot accurately speak of "development". A Spirit neither develops nor evolves; he only unfolds into manifestation that which eternally lies within him. A Spirit, being identical with the Universal Consciousness, can neither increase nor diminish. What he can do, entering into conditions of time and space, is to turn outwards that which is within, to turn attention outwards, and slowly to conquer, by this contact with matter, that knowledge of the universe regarded as phenomenal, which does not come into his consciousness when he is separated off

<sup>1</sup> A Lecture reprinted from *The Adyar Bulletin*, February 1913.

from the universal by that delicate film of matter which is his vehicle in the nirvânic or spiritual, sphere. Within that seed of Divinity all possibilities are contained. It is only the turning outwards which is possible, by the contact with the various planes of matter.

On the other hand, with regard to psychic development, which depends entirely on the conditions of the matter which veils the Spirit, the word "development" is entirely accurate. Psychic progress is literally the envolving and developing of form after form, the forms being separate the one from the other, and being, as regards three of them, new-born at each birth, and dying one after the other in the process of death and of after-death. So that we are face to face with two entirely different processes, which I propose to try to make rather more clear than they are in the minds of many.

These two things are fundamentally different in nature. They belong to those two great opposites by the interaction of which the universe is built—Spirit, Matter. You cannot have two things more absolutely opposed. You may reach that which is Spirit by denying one after the other all the qualities and manifestations of matter. There ought, then, to be a very wide gulf in the minds of students with regard to that which belongs to the development of the psychic, and that which belongs to the unfolding of the Spirit, and if we can get rid of the confusion

that exists so largely amongst us we shall not have wasted time.

Let us glance first at the spiritual and ask what it is. Carry your mind to the higher or spiritual Triad, that reproduction of the Monad as Spirit in his threefold nature, as Will, Intuition and Intellect, sometimes called *Ātma-buddhi-manas*. The Monad himself is the essence and root of Spirit, the Spirit being his reproduction in the three higher spheres of our fivefold system, showing out his three aspects of Power, Wisdom and Activity; these are manifested by the ray of the Monad appropriating an atom from each of the three spheres, the spiritual, intuitional and intellectual; these condition the manifestation of the Monad, each variety of matter showing forth one aspect only, as though the three aspects were separable. Not one of these really exists in separation; where Spirit shows himself forth as Will in the spiritual sphere, there are also present, though subordinate, the two aspects of the Monad which appear in the two succeeding spheres, Intuition and Intellect; both are present in that *ātmic* particle, and form part of its consciousness, although dominated by that Will by which *Ātmā* shows himself forth. So again when you take the second aspect, showing itself forth as Intuition (*Buddhi*), you cannot separate off from that either Will (*Ātmā*) or Intellect (*Manas*); they are both implicitly present, although it is the Wisdom aspect



of the Monad which is there dominant. And so with the third. When we come to Intellect, showing forth the active, or creative, aspect of the Monad, there also we have to recognise the implicit presence of Will and Intuition. Consciousness is one, and it can never show out one aspect alone without the other two being present. You will find it is laid down by one of the greatest of Indian psychologists that we have here continually a reflection and a re-reflection within the Self, and that when we speak of one of them we are thinking of that aspect as working upon itself, and so showing forth that quality predominantly; but that in that same sphere we have the other two aspects, coloured indeed, as it were, by the first; in each case all three are present, two as reflected on to the third, that third dominating the two reflections. And in this way is made up a ninefold division, giving a marvelously accurate classification. But for us just now it is enough to recognise one dominant aspect and two others implicitly present.

When we come down from those two and a half higher spheres, where the true spiritual Triad shows itself forth, to the lower two and a half spheres, we come into the world where matter is dominant. In the higher, consciousness prevails over matter. In the lower, matter prevails over consciousness. The division of higher and lower comes in the middle of the mental sphere, so that the three upper sub-planes

belong to the world of Spirit predominantly, the lower four belonging predominantly to the world of phenomena. In the lower spheres the matter which there enveils the Spirit conditions it far more forcibly and obviously than does the matter on the higher; and the work of the Spirit on those lower planes will be the moulding and organising of matter, in the effort to create for himself vehicles which will express him in the lower world, and deprive him as little as possible of his own inherent powers.

In that lower world also you will see this same triplicity of manifestation continually showing forth, though there again one aspect predominates over the others. For instance, in the emotional sphere, the astral body serves for the vehicle of activity and thought as well as for the vehicle of emotion, and the man working in the astral sphere is the same man as the man working here, with none of his consciousness lost, and showing out the three faces, as they also show out here in the physical body. There is always a danger, as we analyse man into factors, of losing sight of this unit nature of consciousness. When we are dealing with the physical body we recognise the aspects of consciousness and their places of manifestation; we understand quite well that the mental aspect works through the cerebro-spinal nerves, the emotional through the sympathetic system and glands, the volitional through the muscles; all are present.

We must do the same with the astral and mental spheres. This close study of consciousness and its vehicles is absolutely necessary for a real understanding of Spirituality and Psychism.

When we study the spiritual, we are dealing with consciousness in the higher spheres, the characteristic mark of which is unity. "He," says Shri Kṛṣṇa, "who seeth Me in all things, and all things in Me, he seeth, verily he seeth." Nothing other than that is spiritual vision. There is no vision entitled to be called spiritual, save that which sees God in Nature and Nature in God, which recognises the One Universal Bliss, the One Universal Self-Consciousness, the One Universal Existence, and sees all things rooted in THAT and in THAT alone. To realise that Self-Consciousness is alone Wisdom. And we must bear clearly in mind this definition of the Spirit, that it is the consciousness of Unity, of Oneness with the Supreme. Again it is written: "There is nothing moving or unmoving that can exist bereft of Me." That is everywhere to be seen and recognised, and none may call himself spiritual if he does not to some extent enjoy that realisation of the Oneness.

Spirituality is an exceedingly different thing from Psychism, which is the manifestation of Intellect, cognising the external worlds, and seeing the differences, the diversity, in all those worlds. It does not matter whether you are looking at physical, astral,

or mental objects; all looking at objects, all the activity of consciousness utilising matter as a means of contact with objects, is covered by the word Psychism. It depends for its development on the organisation of the sheaths, on their delicacy and refinement; and for the purpose of understanding this, it is enough to think of the human being as composed of consciousness and matter, taking the three lower sheaths simply as the sense-garment. Drop for a moment the thought of the physical, astral, and mental *bodies*; the word "body" seems to connote too much of difference; they are only matter at different stages of density, and the three together make up the sense-garment of the consciousness. Throughout the psychic development, the improvement of the sense-garment is the task which the student has before him. He wants to make each layer of the sense-garment more refined, more sensitive, and to realise it more and more clearly as a garment and not as himself—one garment in three layers. All the evolution that goes on in that garment improves psychic development, bringing the mind into fuller touch with the external world.

If that be clearly grasped, you cannot confuse the psychic and the spiritual, for one belongs wholly to the consciousness in its unity, and the other to the sense-garment in its multiplicity. And you will be inclined neither to overvalue nor to undervalue psychic development. Students are inclined to run into extremes. Neither

extreme position is true. One should take the common-sense view of what is called "psychism". Psychism is the manifestation of consciousness through its sense-garment, and everything that increases the translucency of that garment, in one or other of these layers, is part of psychic development. In our present stage of evolution a large part of this psychic development is going on in the astral body. Consciousness has largely conquered the physical layer of the sense-garment in most people, and is beginning to conquer the astral layer; but as that progress is at present abnormal, it is regarded as something almost supernatural, instead of being taken in the same quiet common-sense way that you take the higher orders of the physical senses amongst ourselves. We know the good musician has a much more delicate ear than most of us, but we do not look on him as apart from us because of that. Taking that delicacy a little further and carrying it to the next layer of the sense-garment does not alter its quality. It is a question of degree and not of kind.

In the physical part of the garment, the lowest layer of the body, there is a sharper division between the senses than there is in other layers. In the mental sphere the consciousness which has not yet touched the physical has a keen recognition of the life within an object, and a very confused impression of the garment of matter in which that consciousness is veiled,

the garment which makes it an object. So also, coming down into the emotional, or astral, sphere, if you take a consciousness that has had no experience of the physical plane at all (as in the Elemental Kingdom) you will find that the entities do not receive from the astral object the clearly defined outline, but a far more blended impression. There are no sharp lines of distinction between the senses; hearing and sight, for instance, melt into one another. It is true that you can point to one part and say: "that is sight," and to another: "that is hearing," but you come to a place where you cannot distinguish clearly between the two senses, for that clear definition takes place for the first time on the physical plane. Only consciousness, having once obtained that definition, does not lose it when it is active in the second layer of the sense-garment. It keeps the definition, and that is what is gained from the physical body, even when the physical body is finally thrown off. Consciousness having passed through the physical sphere never again loses that clearness and definiteness which in the physical sphere it gained. So that when you come to the psychic evolution in the second layer, the astral, you find the advantage of the consciousness having passed through the physical stage.

There is another phrase that comes into my mind from the great Scripture I have already quoted: "without senses enjoying sense objects"

—a phrase which sounds extremely strange and rather unintelligible. The reason is the one I have just spoken of, that the clear definition of the powers of perception in the consciousness is not dependent on the organs, after the organs have served their purpose and have given to it the necessary definition. It is said even of the Logos Himself, who is spoken of in that verse; having passed through all these experiences, He has carried with Him to that lofty rank of Divinity the qualities which in the humbler days of earth, in far-off universes, He slowly gathered and built into Himself as we are building them now.

The whole of the development of consciousness in the sense-garment is psychic, whether in one layer or another. You should not limit the word to the astral and mental spheres, for by making a difference of term in that way you lose the sense of the unity of evolution.

The evolution of the astral body largely takes place from the mental sphere, as the organisation of the physical senses and their apparatus takes place from the astral sphere. As you are working in the developing of your mind now, that mind, in its more evolved stage, fashions for itself that astral layer of the sense-garment which it will be able to use more independently as evolution proceeds. And to develop healthily that second layer, it must be developed from above and not from below. It is possible to

stimulate the growth of the sense-organs in the astral body to some extent from the physical senses, but such stimulation does not carry us very far. Also, it has the tendency to injure the physical organs used, and what is more serious, to injure in the brain those particular centres which, in the later evolution of the astral senses, would be their proper points of expression on the physical plane. For within our brain are certain centres which are the places of junction between the astral and physical sense-organs, making possible the bringing down of the information gathered by the astral into the physical consciousness working through the brain. Suppose the astral chakra, which answers to astral sight, is active. That has its corresponding point between the eye-brows, and a certain development of a centre in the physical body between the eye-brows goes on as the result of the development of that astral sense in the astral body. It is that which lies at the root of the practice of some people in psychometry, and a little-developed form of clairvoyance, where they sometimes put an object to the forehead when trying to psychometrise, or to see with the astral sight. That particular centre and the solar plexus are the two chief centres in making a link of connection between the astral and physical layers of the sense-garment. But if, instead of stimulating from the physical, you stimulate from the mental, then your astral centres



develop healthily and naturally, and with that will come, without any very special effort, the descent of the information gathered in that second layer into the first, so that you become consciously "clairvoyant," "clairaudient," and so on.

When those faculties appear in the waking consciousness the person is called a "psychic" or a "sensitive"; and the name means nothing more than this: that there is a beginning of the shaping of those senses, and that the links between the two layers of the sense-garment are beginning to work. It is a great advantage for the gaining of knowledge to have the astral senses as well as the physical at your disposal; but it will only give you more phenomenal knowledge; it will not quicken your spiritual unfolding. Nay, it may possibly delay it, because it makes the phenomenal more attractive than before. It is more difficult for the person in whom these finer senses are developed to turn away from the outer and more attractive phenomena, and to fix the attention inwards to evoke the true spiritual vision, the knowledge of the One.

It is for that reason that in many of the ancient books—whether Indian, Grecian, or Egyptian—you find so little stress laid on the development of these higher sensuous powers. It is seen that sometimes the person in whom they are developed is thereby made more separate and not more united; whereas in the spiritual

unfolding, the spiritual person feels himself more one with every form of life and less separate. In India the siddhis are definitely regarded as having no part in spiritual development, and those who try to develop them are simply looked at in the same light as those who try to develop keener physical sight or hearing.

The training for psychic development and for spiritual unfoldment is quite different. In psychic development you have to deal with the perfection and organisation of the sense-garment; when you come to deal with the spiritual, the preparation is intellectual, emotional, and moral. I do not mean, in saying that, that morality as such, or the lower intelligence as such, is spiritual; but they are the necessary preparations for the manifestation of the Spirit in man. The growth of the moral character, of self-sacrifice, self-surrender, willingness to serve, the breaking away of the sense of separateness—all this is the preparation for spiritual unfolding. And so also with regard to the higher intelligence. It is absolutely necessary for the spiritual manifestation; and everything that tends to purify the intelligence and raise it from the concrete to the abstract is an approach towards the region where the spiritual unfolding will take place. Hence the immense stress laid in all ancient books on the building up of virtue on the one side, and of intelligence on the other; so that within the good man and the reasonable man, the spiritual

man might descend and find his habitation. Truly, as it is said in *Light on the Path*, "great though the gulf may be between the good man and the sinner . . . it is immeasurable between the good man and the one on the threshold of Divinity". That is true. It is a difference in *kind* and not only in degree. Hence it is that when you are striving to quicken the evolution of man, so that the Spirit may reveal himself within the garb of matter, so much stress is laid on study and on moral training, not as confusing the two, but the one as being the pathway which makes it possible for the other to manifest. The Spirit cannot manifest in the ignorant or in the immoral man; he is latent within him, and until that preparation is made, spiritual unfoldment and manifestation in the world of forms cannot be.

I know that that puts spiritual unfolding very high, and it may shock some people, because whatever is vague they think is spiritual. But really that is not so. A good emotion does not mean consciousness on the buddhic plane. Emotion is not spirituality, although it is often confused with it. There is an enormous gulf between them. Spirituality is the Self-consciousness, conqueror over matter, not the manifestation distorted and stunted in matter, which is emotion. That truth to some people may seem rather cold. It is, of course, nothing of the kind. It is the most inspiring truth

which it is possible to put forward, when a glimpse is caught of what it really means; for there is nothing discouraging in recognising that we have a long path to travel before reaching the spiritual heights. It would be far more discouraging if the small manifestations of emotion and good feeling we find down here were the limit of the Divine in humanity. That they are very often beautiful, I do not deny; but they are not *the* Beauty: that is something wider, vaster, grander, than you or I at present can even conceive. Surely it is more inspiring to the heart and mind to see far off the dawn of a grandeur that some day we know will be ours, than it is to rest content with the miserable and petty manifestations which are all we are capable of at the present time. The one inspires to ceaseless effort, to unwearied aspiration; the other makes us sit down contentedly, thinking we are almost near the manifestation of God in ourselves. But, as we catch a glimpse of those greater possibilities, as we put our thought of Spirit higher and higher, we become more conscious of a strength within ourselves which makes us mighty enough to rise above the highest that we can dream. Only we need time and patience, a high ideal, and noble thinking. One thing only is the sign that the Spirit in us is beginning to put forth his powers: the possession of peace, serenity, strength, and broadness of view. Those show the germinating of the divine seed within us; and as we see those

qualities grow we cannot say: "I am spiritually developed," but we may dare to say: "My face is turned in the right direction, and I am beginning to tread the Path which leads to the manifestation of the Spirit."

ADYAR PAMPHLETS

No. 65

# Evidences for Truth

DEWAN ~~BAHADUR~~

THE HON. MR. JUSTICE T. SADĀSHIVA IYER

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## Evidences for Truth<sup>1</sup>

OUR Theosophical motto is "There is no religion higher than Truth". I take it that Truth means knowledge of true Existence, true Wisdom and true Bliss, or knowledge of Brahman. Brahman is the synthesis of Truth in all its aspects. How are we to get at this Truth? What are the means (Pramāṇa) or criteria of reaching the true knowledge of Brahman?

When we do not talk philosophy and when we behave like ordinary mortals, we look upon the knowledge we get through our physical senses (by ocular or direct perception) as the most definite and valid kind of knowledge. We are so certain of its truth that we contemptuously call other impressions "mere fancy," "mere imagination," "mere moonshine," "not a solid fact," "cloudland". The knowledge obtained through the physical senses is also, of course, knowledge of Brahman, according to Manu. But though it appears to be so real and complete, it is not the whole truth, and in fact, it very imperfectly represents the truth. We all know philosophy well

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, September, 1911.



enough, and I need not therefore elaborate the point that the senses are slayers of the Real. Even exoteric and physical sciences teach us that sense-knowledge is mixed up so much with illusion.

Therefore we turn to Logical Inferential Reasoning (Anumānam), not to destroy our sense-knowledge but to supplement and correct it. We correct the sense-impression that the sun goes round the earth by an elaborate process of reasoning which leads us to the opposite conclusion. So also the sense-impression that matter is destroyed and ceases to exist (say, by the agency of fire) is corrected by the reasoning which proves the indestructibility of matter in its essence, and that it is only the destruction of the form which gave rise to our incorrect sense-impression that the essence was also destroyed.

But logical inferential reasoning, in both its aspects (induction and deduction), can never get rid of doubt as to the absolute truth and soundness of its conclusions, as Mr. Balfour has so conclusively shown in his *Defence of Philosophic Doubt*. Deduction depends on the validity of its premises, axioms and postulates, and on the perfect subtleness and strength of the reasoning powers. Induction, unless we have an infinite number of facts and an infinite mental capacity to comprehend all such facts, cannot also give us the exact truth. We all know the induction of the materialistic scientist that, because the physical brain is closely connected with thought, and in innumerable instances the strength, clearness, activity and the existence of thought seem to be invariably

dependent on the strength, health, nourishment and existence of the physical brain, thought cannot exist without a physical brain composed of tangible cells and nerves and nourished by oxygenised blood. But when the facts of telepathy, hypnotism and mediumistic phenomena could no longer be pooh-poohed as mere fraud, the above inductive inference of the materialistic scientist came down like a house of cards. An inductive conclusion, though based on a million instances, becomes wrong if one single instance to the contrary is clearly proved to exist, and a higher law which would explain and include the single contrary instance also has to be searched for.

The ordinary statement of the so-called law of gravitation is all right for many practical purposes but it cannot explain the facts of yogic levitation or magnetic attraction, and hence, a higher and more accurate law has to be formulated, as H. P. B. has insisted in her writings.

Further, the mind being "the great Slayer of the Real," it has itself to be slain before pure Truth can be reflected in it. It is in a state of constant turmoil through the impinging of astral waves, and is always swayed by likes and dislikes, as the Chinese *Classic of Purity* insists. Wish is father to the thought, and we believe what we wish to believe; and can always find adequate reasons for those conclusions which are in conformity with our predilections, prejudices and tastes. We are satisfied that either Advaitism, or Dvaitism, or Vishishtādvaitism is the only true and

reasonable religion, and the other two must be erroneous and utterly unreasonable. So long as the Ahaṁkāra of the reasoner is not killed, his reasoning powers will not lead him to the exact truth. Reasoning, again, on one's own sense-impressions *alone*, cannot afford adequately numerous data in a single incarnation to arrive at any truth worth the name.

We therefore pass on to the next means, called variously: Competent Testimony, Āpta Vākya, Shabda, Veda, Scriptures, Nigama, Universal Tradition, Historical Conclusions, Shāstras, Shruti, Smṛti, Itihāsa, Purāṇa, Āgamas, etc. By competent testimony, we can only mean the words of those who have conquered love and hate, and have seen truth exactly reflected in their inner mind (antaḥkaraṇa) in the trance (samādhi) state, and after coming down to the ordinary waking (jāgrata) state have tried to communicate what they saw in samādhi, in the ordinary language then prevalent, for the benefit of their contemporaries and of posterity. Such communications, when made through physical sounds and languages after translation into physical-brain-thought, must be tainted by the impurities of the physical brain and by the faults of the languages which act as media of communication. Further, unless the recipient's mind is as pure as that of the communicant's, the impressions on the recipient's mind become further clouded and tainted. Notwithstanding all these defects, this means is of almost the very highest value in arriving at Truth. It does not supersede the two preceding means but enormously

supplements them. Especially in respect to truths of higher planes than the physical, planes in which our ordinary physical senses are powerless, does this come to our aid. Of course, if we obtain and develop by yoga the higher senses of higher planes and see truths direct on those planes, the Vedas become less and less useful, so far as their enunciation of those truths is concerned; just as a book of travel describing scenery is not of much use to the man after he has gone to the place and seen it for himself, though it was of great help to him in going and seeing. I must repeat that testimony does not supersede reasoning. Reasoning is still required:

(a) In accepting particular books and traditions and seers as competent testimony, and rejecting spurious passages and blind pretenders to seership.

(b) In meditating on and trying to find out the correct and logical meaning of the communications in the scriptures, written mostly in archaic languages, the meanings of the words, the idioms and expressions of which languages *must* have altered in time.

The scriptures (nigama), it is clear, must necessarily contain many elements calculated to mislead us. Have the communications come down without clerical mistakes and even forgeries? What are Apocrypha, and what are not? Were all the communicants really those who had seen truths face to face? When each religionist thinks his own scriptures to be the only true Vedas and all others impostures, when the higher criticism has knocked out the dogma of verbal inspiration, when versions differ, when interpretations

differ, when Shaivas contend that other books are not less authoritative than the Samskr̥ṭ Vedaṣ, and Vaiṣṇavas have their "double Vedaṣ," it is clear without elaborate argument that testimony cannot be the highest and clearest means, though it has been indispensable to individual aspirants whom it has *helped* on their paths to see God face to face. The highest means for each, in the very nature of things, can be only direct vision by each of the Supreme. Hence Realisation in the purified heart by perfect intuition in samāḍhi is the highest means, higher than the Veda. Unaided individual effort to open that samāḍhic eye by even the pure of heart and steady of intellect can go but a very little way, just as a child's attempt in a lonely forest to learn things without the aid of an already developed language taught by its elders can go a very little way. It is only the manṭra vibration taught by another (the Elder Brother, Guru, who has similarly received it from His own Elders in the succession of Teachers—Guru Parampara) that opens the divine eye that can see the Truth validly. As the *Kathopaniṣhaṭ* says: "Brahman is too subtle and evasive to be grasped by mere logic (ṭarka) and has to be communicated by another for proper comprehension." So the *Chhāṇḍogya* declares also, and the Lord says in the *Gītā* (iv. 34) that wise Seers of Truth ought to be approached with salutations to obtain Wisdom.

I have treated above of only four means, following the *Shrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In the 19th chapter of

the 11th Skandha (17th Shloka), the Lord mentions to Uddhava only these: Direct, Logical, Testimony, and Self-Realisation. I have humbly followed the Lord's classification, and have tried to show that the highest means is not the Veda but Self-Realisation. This (Ātma-Samvit) might be called in a very real sense direct, as it is as vivid and definite as the highest waking perception obtained by the most healthy physical senses, but it is far greater than ordinary sense-perception, which is very imperfect and very misleading. This Self-Realisation, being perception by the highest spiritual sense, called the divine eye, is the highest sense-perception, and being buddhic perception, is the real waking state. It can also be called logic, as it gives the highest and most exact logical coherence to all our other knowledge. Ordinary logic depends on the keenness, strength and clarity of the intellectual powers of discrimination, similarity and retentiveness. When two intellectual giants fight and differ, an ordinary man can only follow his prejudices and inclinations, and he gets bewildered by the wealth of dialectics poured forth by the combatants. Subtle fallacies are beyond his unravelling. This want of finality in mere reasoning is referred to in the *Vedānta Sūtras* (II, 1. 11) and accepted by all schools of Vedānta and even by the Naiyāyika and Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā schools. Intellectual men differ, because they have not got rid of the Ahaṁkāra which clouds the mind, and also because truth is many-sided and has to be expressed in many ways when the medium is human language, even if it

be a very perfect language like Samskr̥t—literally, the well-constructed language. So, again, this vision might be called the highest Veda, as all Vedas and Shrutiṣ and Āgamas and scriptures are only the concreted results of this highest vision. What God Omniscient taught as Veda, no doubt, must be perfect truth. But what did He teach and how? Did He teach in the Arabic language, the Hebrew language, the Tamil language, the old Samskr̥t or the new (in which the minor Upaniṣhaṭs are written)? As H. P. B. said (*The Secret Doctrine*, III, 72): “It is a loss of time to ask which (of the Scriptures) is the earliest; all are simply different versions of the one Primæval Record of pre-historic Knowledge and Revelation.” It is in this sense alone that all Vedas and Scriptures are Eternal. In page 119, she says: “Dogma and Authority have ever been the curse of humanity, the great extinguishers of Light and Truth.” In the fifteenth chapter of the *Gīṭā* the Lord says: “I am the author of the Vedānta and I alone know the meaning of the Veda.” So the mere admission that revelation is even verbally infallible does not help us much to find out valid Truth. The *Bhagavad-Gīṭā* itself has been commented upon by atheists, and our modern anarchists quote its sublime verses as justifying their hideous actions; the devil can always quote scripture for his purpose. As cycle succeeds cycle and human language succeeds human language, old Vedas collected by the Vyāsa of a cycle must be discarded, not because they are false but because they cannot be understood and are very liable to be misinterpreted. More recent divine

expressions of the same truths must be, and are, brought forward and made permanent by the Vyāsa of the next cycle. Hence, also, the necessity of the Lord's repeated incarnations to re-state the same old truths in newer language. Siddhasena Divākara says that scripture as a source of valid knowledge is "that which was first cognised by a competent person, which is not such as to be passed over by others" (through mere logical reasoning), "which is not incompatible with the truths derived from direct perception," and which helps and guides you by laying down injunctions and instructions in respect of matters "which baffle perception and inference". These competent seers have to drink "Soma" to liberate themselves from their lower bodies (*The Secret Doctrine*, III, 124). The lower "Soma" takes you to svarga, and the higher beyond svarga to the imperishable worlds. Revelation there comes through the grace of the highest Guru (Shri Kṛṣṇa, or Dakṣiṇāmūrti, or Rudra-Shukra). Mere verbal repetition of scriptures will not give us true knowledge. Even reverent meditation on their hidden meanings can only be a help. It is the direct supreme vision which gives the most valid knowledge. This supreme vision is the highest perception, the clearest logic and the most infallible testimony. It cannot be affected by doubts as all the other three means can be. It is the vision which Arjuna enjoyed by the Lord's grace and which removed all his doubts. That highest knowledge on the highest plane has however to be repeated on that plane many times, so as to form part of our constitution;



and has to be brought down by constant practice for use on the lower planes, for the further and final purification of our lower bodies, for the clear understanding of Truth on the lower planes, and for doing real good to the lower worlds and their inhabitants.

All lower evidence and knowledge then feed the Self-realising experience. Self-Realisation is the synthesis and the foundation and consummation of all the other kinds of knowledge and hence does not contradict or totally destroy them. Even the Vedas are below it. Hence the Vedas are spoken of depreciatingly in the *Gītā*. All the four Vedas are included in the lower knowledge in the *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad*. All the Vedas are as useless to the man of pure-hearted intuition, who has seen truth, by God's or Guru's grace, as a small well to a man who is surrounded on all sides by floods of pure water. The mantra given by the Guru at Initiation, and which opens the inner eye, is greater to that Initiate than all the outer Vedas. As the Lord Buddha said in the *Kalama Sutta*, the traditional or literal meaning of the Vedas cannot be considered infallible till our own reason, and not only our reason but our highest samādhic consciousness approve of it, and then all the Vedas which were helps in the earlier stages become useless. This Self-Realisation is described by Mahārṣhi Devendrānāth Tagore as "the Light of Intuitive Knowledge in the perfectly purified heart". And the heart is purified by virtuous sacrificial work and still more rapidly by devotion.

Seeing the Truth once in Samādhi is not enough. "The light of Heaven seen in wakeful moments is soon forgot in dreams of busy life," as Saint Tūkārām says, and as even Arjuna said before about the *Gītā* teachings to Shri Kṛṣṇa. Just as there are grades in the definiteness and clarity of sense-knowledge (the visual perception of an aged colour-blind man being much less valid and true than that of a healthy keen-eyed youth), so even in spiritual vision, that of one who has passed the fourth Initiation and has cast off all the ten fetters, and has seen God several times, or is seeing God continuously (like Nārada or Prahlāda), must be more valid than that of another who has seen God only a few times. The later uncontroversial utterances of perfected seers like the recognised heads of the three Vedāntic schools, are more correct than their earlier utterances and more harmonious with one another.

All the four means give knowledge of Brahman. As Manu said: "The man who is deprived of even one of the ten physical senses is incapable of a true knowledge of Brahman, as water oozes away out of a pot which has even one hole in it." The Infinite Lord cannot be completely known even by Self-Realisation, which can only know his *true nature correctly but not fully*. As *Light on the Path* says: "One can enter the Light but can never reach the Flame." This Self-Realisation is the faith which can move mountains—as the Lord Jesus said. Faith is not (as the schoolboy said): "Believing what you know isn't so." It is not, as a calculating priestcraft

teaches: "Believing a thing because reason revolts against its acceptance as truth," so that the greater the virtue of the faith, the more absurd and impossible the believed dogma looks to the reason. The real faith comes by the opening of inner clairvoyance (or clear higher sight) through the Guru's grace, and its indispensable preliminary is faith in the Guru. Neither of the two faiths is opposed to reason, but both are supported by the highest reason and by the scriptures. As Shri Rāmānujāchārya says, the truths of faith and of the scriptures cannot be disproved by the logical reason (though they may not also be capable of proof to all by the logical reason) and their probability can be supported as fully by reason as any other probability. All the Vedas might be destroyed for seers like Tirumoolar or Tāyumanavar and they could create new scriptures and shāstras which might be also called in a very real sense "the oldest and the eternal Vedas". It is the Svānubhava vision (which is a more valid means than all the Vedas) that Arjuna obtained through the grace of Shri Kṛṣṇa when the latter showed His Universal Form.

Let me close with a few words to my brother Theosophists. The existence and supremacy of the means called Self-Realisation can neither be established nor disproved by the controversial reason, as that evidence underlies all other evidence and they all depend for their respective validities on their being pervaded by its ray; our conviction of the reality of the waking state is due to our sense-perception being pervaded by a minute ray of Self-Realisation.

Only by the ray of this in each of us can each of us accept it as the highest means. Does that faint Self-realising consciousness, or higher Intuition, not larger than a mustard seed, give us the undoubting belief that our Theosophical Movement is under the guidance of Those who are Masters in realised knowledge? Does it assure us that it is destined to be *the* coming movement, that our revered President is in touch with and is the mouthpiece of Those who are the First Section of the Society? Will that knowledge, free from doubt and hesitation, make us give up our life, worldly honours and position, wealth and comforts, if necessary, in the sacred cause of the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion? May it be so in the case of at least a few of us, for no mere external facts, intellectual disputations, or scriptural passages, will give us the strength of devotion necessary for the supreme sacrificial spirit required by the present times; and the manifestation of a ray, however feeble, of that spiritual intuition born in the purified heart through the grace of the Guru, is indispensable in each of the true workers in this grand cosmopolitan movement.

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The Bearing of Religious  
Ideals on Social  
Reconstruction

ANNIE BESANT

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THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

ADYAR, MADRAS, INDIA



# The Bearing of Religious Ideals on Social Reconstruction<sup>1</sup>

IN the Middle Ages beliefs were held to be of supreme importance, and a man might die in the odour of sanctity after having poisoned his surroundings with the ill-savour of an evil life. To accept the teachings of the Church was the one thing needful, and she smoothed the way to salvation for the repentant reprobate—repentant because he had no longer strength to sin, and because the fires of hell glowed luridly around his death-bed. So far was this apotheosis of belief carried that the heretic of pure life was regarded as more hateful, because more dangerous, than the evil-doer, as poisonous food would be rendered more attractive when “served up on a clean platter”—the phrase was used, if I remember rightly, in wrath against the heretic Melancthon’s blameless life.

Then followed a re-action against this view, and in the days when we, who now are old, were young,

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, December 1912, January 1913.



it was loudly declared that rightness of life was the one important thing, and that it mattered little what a man believed provided that his life were pure. It was held that all was well with a man if he acted nobly, and that his beliefs were quite a secondary thing.

The first view—as to the supreme importance of Right Belief—is true; but the belief which is supremely important is that which the man really holds, not that which his lips profess. Bain rightly pointed out that the test of belief is conduct; if a man *believes* that murder and theft will lead him to hell, he will neither slay nor steal; but if he believes that he may murder and thief in safety, provided that on his death-bed he profess contrition and belief in the articles of the Christian Faith, and that he will thus escape hell, then he will murder and thief, if his taste leads him in that unpleasing direction. He will look forward to repentance on his death-bed. He may even risk not having a death-bed, if he believes of a brigand, shot as he was riding in one of his forays, that:

Between the saddle and the ground,  
Mercy he sought, and mercy found.

Arrangements of this kind, enabling an unfortunate man to escape from the unending torture which was supposed to be the result of his temporary ill-doings, were quite necessary while people believed the immoral doctrine of everlasting punishment. The mistake of the Middle Age view was the making

of what a man *said* he believed the important test, the test of salvation—not what he really believed. Long before Bain pointed to a man's conduct as the real criterion of the strength of his belief, an ancient scripture had said: "The man consists of his faith; that which his faith is, he is even that."<sup>1</sup> The original Samskr̥t phrase is very strong: "Faith-formed this man; whatever faith, that even he."

This vital truth of the forming of character by belief is ignored in the modern view, which exalts character and takes no account of the source whence character springs. If we analyse the case of the Middle Age ruffian, brutal and licentious in his life and repentant on his death-bed, we shall see the utter truth of Shri Kṛṣṇa's words; he believed that the pardon of the Church, voiced by one of her priests, could prevent him from "dying in mortal sin" and going to hell, no matter how vile his life had been. His conduct was shaped by this belief; he sinned wildly and brutally; he sought pardon on his death-bed; each course of action represented a side of his belief.

The true part of the modern view is the supreme importance of character, and the recognition that, in a universe of law, happiness must ultimately befall the righteous liver: "If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him."<sup>2</sup> In all worlds it is very well

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad-Gītā*, xvii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Dhammapada*, i. 2.

with the righteous man. "By good conduct man attains life. By good conduct he attains fair fame, here and hereafter."<sup>1</sup> "It is your own conduct which will lead you to reward or punishment, as if you had been destined therefor."<sup>2</sup> In the modern view, what are regarded as mere differences of lip-belief are properly regarded as unimportant; it does not really deny the truth that high ideals of life affect character.

The full statement would be: A man's thoughts modify, may even re-create, his innate character, which is the outcome of his thoughts in previous lives; that which he thinks on he becomes. "Man is created by thought." Hence that which he believes, being part of his thought, affects his actions, and according to the strength of the belief and the extent to which it occupies his thoughts will be the effect upon his conduct.

Mere lip-beliefs, thoughtlessly accepted from outside and seldom thought about, do not strongly affect conduct; all religions teach the same fundamental principles of ethics, so differences in theological tenets need not much affect conduct. Differences in these are mostly on subjects which do not bear very directly on life, and these differences are, moreover, mostly superficial. Further, they do not largely occupy the mind of the ordinary man. Still, careless and inaccurate thought on these is injurious, and leads to slipshod thinking on other things. To escape this

<sup>1</sup> *Mahābhārata*, Anushāsana Parva, civ.

<sup>2</sup> *The Sayings of Muhammad*, 116.

undesirable influence, a man should either form his theological beliefs with extreme care after assiduous study, or should not dwell upon them in his mind, for "that which he thinks upon that he becomes". Sooner or later, thought flows into action.

Hence the enormous importance of ideals, for according to the thoughts brooded over by the mind, cherished in the heart, will be the conduct of the outer life. "Action" is threefold, two parts being invisible and one part visible. Desire breeds it, thought shapes it, act manifests it. An ideal is a fixed idea; it is created by the mind; it is nourished by desire; it presses ever outwardly into the world of manifestation, seeking to express itself in action. And inasmuch as the religious ideal is that which comes closest to the heart and most dominates the brain, the bearing of the religious ideals of citizens on the society in which they live cannot safely be disregarded by those who guide such societies. Civilisations are built round a central religious ideal, and are moulded and shaped by the thoughts which flow from it. The ideal which dominated the ancient Āryan root-stock was Dharma;<sup>1</sup> that which ruled in Egypt was Knowledge; that in Persia, Purity; that in Greece, Beauty; that in Rome, Law; that in Christendom, the Value of the Individual and Self-sacrifice. Each of these ideals shaped a religion and made a type of

<sup>1</sup> Dharma is Duty, but far more than Duty. It implies that a man's Duty is shown by his circumstances and character, which are the outcome of his past evolution, and it indicates his best and easiest way of present evolution.

civilisation, and the evolution of each type only becomes intelligible as this is seen.

In ancient India the central thought was the Family—the man, the woman, the child. Out of this, connoting the duty of each member of the trio to each other member, grew the social ideal of Hindūism—Dharma. The dominant thought of the whole social system is that of mutual obligation ; these obligations bind human beings together into a social organism, and the State is a conglomeration of families. The family, not the individual, is the unit, and hence the profound difference between the social ideal of the Indian and of the European. A social system based on the family as the social unit must be a system of mutual obligations, of Duties. A social system based on the individual as the social unit must be a system of mutual contracts, of Rights. The latter is a modern ideal, while the former may be said to dominate the ancient world and the East of to-day, though the East is now being invaded by the western ideal. Throughout the East, Duties, not Rights, have been the central ideal, the basis of human society ; on Duties were built up social systems in which each had his place, his work, his map of life. Looking at these, we realise that human life was once orderly, instead of anarchical ; and we begin to see that while the social ideal is that of the struggle of wild beasts in a jungle, social organisation can never rise to a high level.

In order to realise the effect of Religious Ideals on a Society growing up around them and dominated

by them, we should carefully study the history of the past, bearing this in mind. Let us take for such study the Ideals of Christianity, and the development of European Society under their influence.

Two main Ideals appear to me to be presented by Christianity: (1) The Value of the Individual; (2) Self-sacrifice.

The first of these made the Individual, instead of the Family, the social unit, and, by emphasising the value of the individual soul, evolved and strengthened the sense of Individuality in man. The immense stress laid on the life here as determining man's everlasting destiny; the submergence of the idea of reincarnation—universal in the ancient world—entailing the permanence of the after-death happiness or misery brought about by the use of that one life on earth, thus magnifying its importance beyond all measure; the substitution of this conception of the overwhelming value of earthly life with its accompanying heaven or hell for that of a continued life, repeatedly circling through the three worlds—physical, intermediate and heavenly—in a long evolutionary process by which, ultimately, perfection was attained; all this inevitably led to the emphasising of the value of the individual possessed of this single chance of salvation; this one, short, span of earthly life linked to such gigantic outcome magnified the all-importance of the individual soul. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in

exchange for his soul?" The Christian teaching, based on the Hebraic ideas of the fixed earth with its revolving firmament studded with sun and moon and "the stars also," made man as truly the centre of life as was his earth of the universe. For man God descended upon earth, took birth in human flesh, and died; man's salvation was God's chief occupation; for man He rose, ascended into heaven, and thence would come again; man's behaviour pleased or grieved Him, made Him content or jealous and wrathful; "God is angry with the wicked every day"; heaven was clouded by man's ill-behaviour, and rejoiced over his contrition. Man's importance became enormous in this scheme of things, and his value rose to an unimaginable figure. If we contrast it with the previous conception of a continued life—with its quiet enduring of present wrong as the outcome of past ill-doing; with its patient striving to plant seeds of qualities which in the future would flower and bear fruit; with its gentle disregard of the fate of a single life which bulked but small in the face of a life everlasting, stretching through a long vista of births and deaths, —if we contrast these two conceptions, we shall realise the impetus given to Individuality by the Christian religion, the magnifying of the individual man.

Hence we have, in the West, Individualism as the basis of Society; Man stands alone, isolated, a congeries of inherent, inborn Rights. The apotheosis of the Individual is seen in the assertion of the Rights of

Man, and the necessary corollary of a competitive Society; the individual man asserts himself and fights against his fellows; the individual classes struggle with each other; the individual nations war with each other. Each fights for his own hand; each seeks to win by his own individual strength of body or brain that which he desires to possess; competitors in trade carry on cut-throat competition; capitalist and workman fight by lock-out and strike; rival kingdoms seek the bloody arbitrament of war; the weaker nations are exploited for the enriching of the stronger; trade-expansion is forced by conical shot, and markets are opened by the sword; Society becomes a weltering chaos of struggling interests; might is right; the hand of the strong is on the throat of the weak; the helpless is trampled under foot.

Is it, then, ill with the world? Is this cockpit civilisation the result of the teaching of the Gentlest, the most Compassionate, of the Lover of men? Nay, be a little patient, O critic of a great work of art while still half-hewn from the stone. All is very well, despite the outward seeming, for this strong Son of God, who is Man, is but evolving the forces which are necessary for the work which shall be done by Him when the strength which now crushes the weak shall be yoked to their service, and each seed of their pain shall blossom into the splendid flowers of their joy.

For the second Ideal of Christianity, shaped less by ecclesiastical doctrine than by the all-compelling



power of a Perfect Life, is that of Self-sacrifice, whereof the Cross is the ever-inspiring symbol ;

. . . . the Cross of Christ

Is more to us than all His miracles.

The piteous figure of the dying Christ, thorn-crowned and scourged, nail-pierced and naked, was lifted to the heights of unsurpassable command when o'er its pathetic weakness brooded the curbed omnipotence of a God, voluntarily bowing an Immortal Life to a shameful death, and permitting the strong hands which upheld the universe to be nailed by His creatures to the cross. Such was the Figure which silently stood over against Christendom—silently indeed, but there was magic in the silence. Through the storm and the turmoil, through the struggle and the anguish, a voice was ever softly breathing : “ Forasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” From the eyes of angry men and weeping women and hungry children shone out the dumb appeal of the eyes of the suffering Christ. Strength was shamed in the moment of its triumph ; ruth was stirred when greed should have slept, full-fed. In some wondrous way weakness was seen as being stronger than strength, and pain as sweeter than joy. And then there came to the heart of Christendom the meaning of the forgotten words spoken by its Lord : “ He that is greater among you, let him become as the younger, and he that is chief as he that doth serve . . . I am among you as he that doth serve.” Then rang out the words of His servant Paul : “ We that are strong ought

to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." More and more is this Ideal of Self-sacrifice asserting itself in the Christendom of to-day, the Ideal of yoking strength to Service, of recognising the measure of power as the measure of responsibility, of the joy and the glory of voluntary renunciation. That is the Ideal to which the younger generation of the wealthy and the highly placed is stretching out hands aching to serve, is offering up hearts aflame with passionate devotion to man. And that is the Ideal which shall triumph, and shall turn the strength which has been gained in struggle to the uplifting of the trampled, which shall consecrate that strength to the performance of duties instead of to the assertion of rights.

This is the permanent Ideal, while the other is temporary, and shall pass away, having served its purpose, and shall be looked back upon as marking one of the many stages through which man has climbed from savagery to civilisation; it will be seen clearly in the future—as some already see it to-day—that Society could not endure as a constant battle-field of warring interests, but that there must come a great reconstruction, in which the needs of all shall be reconsidered, the happiness of all shall be aimed at, the extent of possession shall measure the duty of service.

That is the Ideal which, in many different forms, is making its way among the nations of the West. Sometimes it appears in the fierce shape of democratic Socialism, with class-hatred as its inspiration; but hate

is a disintegrating force ; it cannot construct ; and every effort that springs from hatred is doomed to exhaust itself in failure. Side by side with this is another form—a Socialism of love, which aims at giving, but does not exhort to spoliation. It is the noble longing of the happy to bring happiness to the unhappy, of the educated to bring knowledge to the uneducated, of those who have leisure to bring leisure and diminution of toil to those who labour. It is the feeling we call “the social conscience”—a feeling which has its roots in love and sympathy, and which is therefore constructive. For the forces born of love are those which join together, and only a Society which is built on love, and cemented by love, can endure through the ages of the future.

Let us consider what religious Ideal will now serve us as a basis for the reconstruction of Society. What Ideal will suffice to breathe into men’s hearts the necessary inspiration for action? Can such an Ideal be presented in a way so precise, clear, intelligible and rational, that it will command the brains of men as well as attract their hearts, that it will give to the social conscience the force of a natural law? Unless this can be done, our labours will largely fail, for we cannot rely for social reconstruction only on the generous impulses of the noblest and most spiritual men and women. It is necessary that all people should feel that a law exists, accord with which means happiness, and disregard of which brings ruin—slowly or swiftly, but inevitably. For there is nothing which so compels human reason

as the sense of an inviolable natural law, working around us, below, above us, a law from which we cannot escape, and to which we must conform ourselves—or suffer. In Society, as in religion and in morals, we must appeal to the reason, we must justify our proposals before the bar of the intellect; only thus can we bring those whose instincts—growing out of the past—are anti-social, to realise that they cannot wisely satisfy those instincts, because such satisfaction would result in a common ruin, in which they, as well as others, would be engulfed.

What religious Ideals, then, are there which may serve as a basis for Society, and may be seen as rooted in natural law, unchangeable and inviolable? First: the One Life. We must realise that we all share a common Life, are rooted in that Life, so that nothing that injures another can be permanently good for any one of us; that the health of the body politic, as much as of the body individual, depends on the healthy working of every part, that if one part is diseased the whole of the body suffers.

On this point science and religion teach the same truth. We can show, from a book on physiology, how the scientific man builds up, in ever more complicated fashion, that which he calls an individual. He recognises that each of our bodies is built up of myriad individuals, each of which lives its own life, was born, grew, died and decayed; it is huge communities of these individuals which make our bodies—plastids or cells he calls them as they are walled or unwalled—whether actively moving about

in the blood, or comparatively stable; these form the lowest grade of individuals. Then when these are joined together we have the second grade of individuals—tissues. Tissues, joined together, give us the third grade of individuals—organs. Organs joined together make the fourth grade of individuals—plant, animal and human bodies. Bodies joined together make the fifth grade of individuals—communities. Communities joined together make the sixth grade of individuals—nations. Nations joined together, make the seventh grade—Humanity. This is not the teaching of the poet, of the dreamer, of the man fond of allegory, simile, symbol. It is the dry presentment of fact in the physiological handbook. For science, out of the study of diversity, has realised the underlying unity, as religion, beginning with the unity, has divided gradually that unity in training the State, the Family, the Individual. The scientific man regards humanity as an organism, and religion recognises the same idea. Only where science sees one universal Life, religion sees also one universal Consciousness, and calls that Consciousness—God. Religion teaches the Immanence of God: One Life in many forms, One Consciousness in many consciousnesses, One Spirit in many spirits—The ONE individualised for love's sake, for bringing "many sons unto glory".

Thus this idea of One Life in us and in all, One Life expressing itself in countless individuals, is expressed alike by religion and by science. It matters not whether we climb up to a truth

from below by countless observations—the Method of Science, or descend into matter from the heights of Spirit—the Method of Religion; both ultimately proclaim the same reality, and this unity of Life, and therefore of Humanity, may be accepted from either. The recognition of that common life is the only sure basis for the building up of Society in the multiplex individuals that we call nations.

Let us suppose that this thought becomes the dominant thought in all minds; will they not inevitably begin to realise that the health of the whole must depend on the health of the parts? Put poison into the mouth, and the whole body suffers. Inject it into a vein, and the whole body is sick. Allow poverty, misery, ignorance, to spread abroad in your body politic, and the whole body politic becomes diseased, and there is no sound health in it. A belief in the Immanence of God compels the recognition of the Solidarity of Man: “There is one Spirit *and One Body*.” The second truth is only the earth-side of the first. Hence any scheme of social reconstruction that is to endure must be based on the practical recognition of a common Life in which all are sharers. That means that there must be no slums, and no plague-spots of vice in our cities; it means the disappearance of the frightful poverty which gnaws at the life of millions of our fellow-beings. It means such a recognition, such a realisation, of the common Life, that we who are cultured and comfortable shall feel diseased and tortured unless we are doing our utmost

to relieve our brothers and sisters from suffering ; a realised common Life cannot rest content while there is so much agony unregarded.

This is felt in blood-relationship. There is no need of law to compel a brother to assist a brother ; the law of love in the heart negates the need for any other law, and compels us to carry help to a suffering member of the family. And it is true that "God hath made of one blood" all the children of men ; and until we feel for those outside the blood-family as we feel for those within, until for us all form one family, until—in the phrase of an old Hindū scripture—we regard all the elders as our parents, the contemporaries as our brothers and sisters, the youngers as our children, we have not really risen to the *human* point of view at all. For in true men and women, the sense of love, compassion and sympathy—of Service, in a word—stretches over earth, through death, and back to earth again, and just in proportion as we have evolved this quality in far-reaching benevolence are we truly Man.

As this truth becomes generally recognised, all who suffer will have an indefeasible claim on all who are able to help, by the mere *fact* of their suffering ; instead of running away from the sight of suffering, and trying to forget it, as so many do to-day, we shall allow the suffering to wring our hearts until we have removed it from another. We shall live out the exquisite words of that gem of literature, *The Voice of the Silence*, given to us by H. P. Blavatsky : "Let not the fierce sun dry one tear of pain before

thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye. But let each burning human tear drop on thy heart and there remain; nor ever brush it off until the pain that caused it is removed." And it is written: "To live to benefit mankind is *the first step.*"

As this Ideal begins to rule, the sense of true Solidarity will arise, and Society will be built in full recognition of the law that social health depends on the health of every individual in Society, that it is not enough that some should be successful, but that all must have their share of happy life. Without this, Society perishes. The law of the common Life, the expression of which is Brotherhood, is woven into the very substance of the human race. There have been many Empires, many Kingdoms in the past, and they have all broken up when they denied the law of Brotherhood. Where Brotherhood is ignored, it breaks that which ignores it. Empires have been builded by King-Initiates, and have lasted for thousands of years in happiness and prosperity; but when, in later days, selfishness grasped the sceptre, the Empire slowly crumbled into dust.

The first Ideal, then, which is necessary for Social Reconstruction, is the Unity of Life—we are all one. None can suffer in the body politic without the happiness of all being tainted; success and failure are common for the whole of us; while to ignore the law may for a brief time bring success, in the long run it inevitably brings destruction. A man takes advantage of his fellow man, builds up his own business



by the destruction of the businesses of his neighbours, gathers together money by injuring, not by serving, those around him. Perhaps as a lawyer he is unjust, unfair, and wins his cases and fame and fortune by unjust and unfair pleadings in our Courts. The result is that the standard of morality of the nation is lowered. Commerce and trade become rotten, and no man can really trust his neighbour; for the tricks of business and trade are played, and people know it. As mistrust gradually spreads through the people, prosperity sinks lower and lower; and the children and grandchildren of the successful but dishonest man share in the degradation of the whole nation. For the poison that he put into the veins of the nation has gradually spread through the whole body, and the whole is sick and degraded: the national life becomes polluted and devitalised, and every one suffers. The wealth he gained by wrong is scattered, and the family, for which he cheated and saved, sinks down in the general national decay.

Another religious Ideal, needed especially for the actual work of Social Reconstruction, is the joy and glory of Sacrifice. This again is beautifully seen in the family. No compulsion is there needed. Where food goes short, the youngest children are the first to be fed. The baby is the last to be neglected, when pressure comes upon the family resources: for, instinctively, the elders feel that the burden must not fall on the weaker shoulders, while they are there to bear it in their stead. Sacrifice is seen not

to be sorrow, but a healthy instinct of the true human heart, and wherever it meets weakness there comes the impulse to serve.

And if this were carried out in the reconstruction of Society, what would be the result? No longer then would most be expected from the weakest, nor would the bearing of the heaviest burdens be put on the shoulders least fitted to sustain them. Who, in our Society, are those who most need something of the ease of life—good food, good clothing, good shelter, and leisure that will truly recreate? Surely it is those who toil—those who are giving their strength to production, and who for long hours labour for the common helping. And yet those, under our present system, are the worst fed, worst clothed, worst housed. It is far harder for a man, exhausted by eight, nine, ten hours of labour, to go home to a slum where the air is foul and the surroundings repulsive, than it would be for one less exhausted. It may be said that he feels it less than would one accustomed to other life. That is true, for habit dulls. But is not this the heaviest condemnation of our social system, that we have crushed our workers down to the point where they do *not* feel sufficiently acutely the evil conditions of their lives? We force them to be less than human, and then plead their lack of refined humanity as an excuse for leaving them as they are.

Modern civilisation has failed to make the masses of the people happy. Look at the faces of the poor; they are the faces of a saddened and weary people,

weary with the burden of life. Until the people are happy, we have no right to talk of "Society"; there is only a weltering chaos of social units, with no social organisation. But gradually we shall take the social question in hand, and aim at the realisation of the splendid phrase: "*From each according to his capacity; to each according to his needs.*" That is the Law of the Family, and one day it will be the Law of the State; for it is the true social law. As the truth of reincarnation becomes accepted once more, the duty of the elders to the youngers, the claim of the youngers on the elders, will be recognised; help, protection and training will be gladly rendered by the elders, and the evolution of the youngers will be quickened.

This can only come about by religious effort and the religious spirit. Not out of the Ideal of material prosperity but out of the religious Ideal must spring the Sacrifice that is joy, because it is the conscious expression of the common life; only out of the religious Ideal can come the Brotherhood which exists in all its splendour in the spiritual world, and, in time, shall surely spread to us in this mortal sphere. It is the spiritual sight which is the true vision; and the testimony of the spiritual consciousness, which has been so ignored in the West, is beginning to be seen as an asset in human Society. That spiritual consciousness always speaks for Unity, for Brotherhood, for Service and for Sacrifice; as it unfolds, it will bring the materials for a nobler social State.

The Immanence of God; the duty of the strong to serve and to protect; the linking together of power and responsibility; the realisation that the higher and stronger should put forward no rights—that rights belong to the weaker and the more helpless; these Ideals, as they are recognised, will regenerate Society, and will stimulate the noblest emotions of the human heart to love, to help and to serve. There will be no need of confiscatory legislation, for the heart full of love will be the law of life; it will be a question of giving not of taking, of voluntary help not of compelled drudgery. Then will the danger of warfare pass away, and peace, which is the fruit of love, will spread over the lands. In the unity realised by religion, the apparently conflicting interests of men on the material plane will disappear, and as the Spirit of Love dominates, the discords caused by hatred will pass away.

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Beauty in the Light of  
Theosophy

BY

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## Beauty in the Light of Theosophy<sup>1</sup>

WE are familiar with the idea of the synthetic rôle of Theosophy in the domain of religious thought. We, as Theosophists, know that it forms a bridge between the intelligence and the heart, between science and religion; that it gives a basis to faith, and, by enlarging, spiritualises the domain of science. At one time or another of our lives we have, each one of us, experienced the blessed working of this synthesis, and its precious value has been brought home to us.

There are, however, other spheres with which we are less familiar, and in which this problem has been less elaborated. And yet the working of this synthesis makes itself everywhere felt in a most forcible way, as for instance, in the sphere of the child, where we are face to face with the problem of education. We see that Theosophy, armed with its synthetic and enlightening power, enables us to grapple with the most intricate problems of education, to sound depths which have never yet been fathomed.

<sup>1</sup> A Paper read at the International Congress, Stockholm. Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, September, 1913.



There is, it appears to me, a truth which should be an axiom for every Theosophist, and it is that the centre of gravity of all education resides in the education of Self—for to that end the work of all educationalists should tend. Awaken as early as possible in every human being the desire to work towards the culture of his or her own soul and character.

It may be remarked that this desire is bound to follow the awakening of the religious consciousness, and it is brought home to us best by the pathway of the Beautiful.

What then here is Beauty?

It is the partial manifestation of Divine Harmony on earth. It is brought about by the perfection of sound or colour, of form or of movement, which accompanies the unveiling of the life of the soul; it is effected in a much more noticeable way, when we presuppose the perfection of sentiment, of thought and of character.

We thus arrive at a synthesis of enormous scope: the synthesis of the ethical problem together with that of *Æsthetics*, for the source of both is Beauty.

What then are we to understand by *Æsthetics*? It is the science which teaches us to understand and realise the external beauty of everything, while Ethics (moral duty, obligation) teaches us to appreciate and realise the internal, inner beauty of everything.

It is clear and evident that these two spheres are in intimate contact one with the other. Beauty of sound, colour and form must imperceptibly lead us to the worship of moral beauty.

But we must first of all be of one accord as to what we term the science of beauty. There is a wide difference between the words *Æsthetics* and *Æstheticism*.

"Nothing is beautiful but the true," said Boileau. Without truth there can be no beauty. And the only conditions under which it can manifest itself are simplicity and purity, which always accompany true beauty. It is in an atmosphere of purity that the artist's talent grows, and that is why he must learn to live up to the conception of higher things—on the heights, as it were. One self-interested movement, one selfish desire, one earthly thought, and the pure current of inspiration becomes troubled, and the artist loses his creative genius. This tragic sequence has been vividly depicted by the Russian writer, Gogol, in one of his short stories, "The Picture". It tells of a richly gifted young painter who begins to barter his talent; little by little his capacity weakens, his character decays, and ultimately his talent perishes.

*Æstheticism*, on the contrary, does not seek true beauty, which it is incapable of producing. It seeks only effect, by what path, by what means, it matters not. Void of real life, it seeks the illusion of life, and works on our nerves by unexpected and vibratory impressions, which produce certain sensations. Ignorant of true beauty, *Æstheticism* can exist in an atmosphere of impurity, which by contrast enables it to produce its effects in a more marked degree. Hence it seeks what is artificial, unhealthy, frightful, and it is in the domain of human passions that its ravages are most disastrous.

History furnishes us with many striking examples of the excesses to which Æstheticism may lead. It suffices to remember Nero who, in the midst of his orgies, and while witnessing the torturing of the Christians, paid minute attention to the effect of beautiful light, and sang to his own accompaniment on the harp while watching the burning of Rome, ordered by him for the satisfying of his corrupted thirst for pleasure. Here we gain an idea as to the lengths to which Æstheticism dare boldly venture when it is rampant; and that is, as a general rule, whenever and wherever there is moral and social decay. False in its conception of beauty, cultivating forms only, it becomes a hideous mask in its negation of the spirit of true life.

But Ethics, the culture of the beautiful, always strikes the true note, the right chord, and thus becomes on its upward march the twin sister of moral rectitude.

But again, how is this union brought about? It is brought about by the aid of rhythm, which spans the spaces between the different planes of the universe; for rhythm is naught else than the manifestation of Life, and Life is a divine rhythm.

A modern writer, the Prince Volkousky, has given us a delightful definition of the word rhythm and its value. Rhythm, he says, exists, beats, and vibrates throughout the universe. The drop of dew which falls from the roof on the sand, the magpie tapping on the sounding trunk of the willow tree, the insect which leaves the regular marks of its passage across

the soil, the twinkling star now enlarging, now diminishing its disc of light, the ocean wave making its bed with rhythmic uniformity on the shore, and then gurgling adown the beach as it returns to the sea—all these are the beatings of the universal heart, which reaches its realisation in man.

But it lies in the power of man to change his rhythm, and not only his own but that of others, and this power is perhaps the greatest that nature has conferred upon him. Thanks to it, man has created the sphere of Art, and thanks to his capacity to direct his own will to the transformation of his rhythm, man is able to work at his education of Self, not in order to create art, but in order to create on earth a fuller, richer, more beautiful, more precious, happier life, than that which men and women lead to-day.

The writer here touches an essential point, for if man is able to transform his rhythm by harmonising himself with that which he contemplates, we have there the method of moral alchemy, with possibilities for the perfecting of man which stretch beyond the limit of our imagination.

If we fix our attention on any object and seek to know it, what happens? We begin to vibrate with it, and in this union of souls we live with it, it is in us; that is to say, there is a phenomenon of identification, a phenomenon which presently brings about a complete transformation of the whole being.

Let us take for instance a very simple case. You go for a walk in the woods, and, busy with your own thoughts, you stride along paying no special attention

to the paths you are traversing, to the branches which interlace overhead, to the beauty of sun and sky; you gain from your walk but a sensation of physical well-being; you will have learnt little or nothing. But if you start out for the same walk leaving behind you all worldly pre-occupations and selfish thoughts, and give yourself up to the beauty of all that surrounds you, the flowers, the branches, the sky, you will be penetrated and inspired and strengthened by the peacefulness, the rest, the glory of it all. Then you will vibrate in unison with Nature, and you will feel it as a living symbol of spiritual reality, of which it is but one of the countless veils. Its voice will penetrate into your heart as a poem of joy and gladness, to which your soul will respond by a hymn of thankfulness, and you will bow in reverent gratitude before Him who teaches us to know Him by His beautiful works; you will, I reiterate, return from your walk penetrated and filled with the purity and peace which breathe from Nature, for you will have been, if but for a few moments, in intimate contact with the soul of Nature.

Returning home, you will, if you are an artist, perhaps sing, or write a poem; you will perhaps paint a picture, which will inspire those who see it; or again, it may be you will simply just turn over a new page in your life with a vow to keep it cleaner than the previous one; for all these signs are one and the same. Your Spirit, in direct contact for a moment with the Divine Self, will have dilated your being by inspiring it with a creative force, which will seek to rush out in

creation. The deeper the contact in these hours of contemplation, the deeper the results. And herein lies the secret of Genius, which instinctively knows how to give itself up entirely to these hours of profound pondering, to the earnest contemplation of a phenomenon or an idea, and thus are made the great discoveries which form epochs in the history of thought and human culture. It has been justly said that what distinguishes a man of genius from other men is the capacity for concentration.

In all the spheres of human activity this capacity is essential, and it is by the culture of it that the work of the artist, the poet, and the thinker begins.

Let us now pass on to the domain of moral rectitude. Here we meet with the same essential points. It is governed by the same laws, the same results accrue. Those who lead a deep and spiritual life and who become our teachers always begin by awaking in us the desire of inner attention, which alone can give the true harvest. If we study the lives of the saints, we invariably find marked out most clearly the step from contemplation to concentration, which we must follow, and this last, in its turn, leads to illumination.

One of the Fathers of the Greek Church, Father Theophane, defines the spiritual travail of man in the following manner :

From his intelligence he descends into the heart, and there rests in the presence of God.

Then comes down silence so great, that the movement of a fly could be heard. And it is in this silence that are born the following states of the soul :

Concentrated attention.

A peaceful benevolence towards all, even towards our enemies.

Complete recollectedness.

The deliverance of the heart from all earthly strife.

The separation from all that is temporal.

Wisdom then enlightens the will, and, arrived at this state of the soul, man thirsts to establish harmony between the external and the internal . . . . His love of God becomes an irresistible force, which seeks to give itself and to shed its rays on every human being.

Thus said one of the Fathers of the Greek Church.

It is interesting to find in philosophy the knowledge of the same laws, and of the power of concentration.

Fichte says: "Objects of the external world are created in the super-individual consciousness, and are given to the Self for contemplation. And by contemplating these objects we arrive at a knowledge of the world, which is the image of God."

Schelling, by the same method, arrives at the following conviction: "I am a living Spirit."

Hegel proclaims: "The true knowledge of the Absolute is only possible by contemplation, which carries us beyond all that we can conceive."

These quotations from the works of philosophers and saints give as a result three important things:

1. That spiritual work, like all other work, demands continued attention, and that concentration is the beginning of it.

2. That the contemplation of anything great helps to engender concentration.

3. That during the hours of contemplation a process of intimate identification goes on which, by putting

us into harmony with the person or thing contemplated, leads to the transfiguration of the being who contemplates.

In this state of transfiguration, which is very near illumination, is born spiritual cognition, the Gnosis, in which love and knowledge are compounded, and Wisdom appears. Wisdom, in its turn, illuminating our Will, impels it to active service, and makes of us servants of God and humanity.

This last expression, the supreme expression of this state of the soul, is formulated in the Vedānta by the cry of the Yogī of India: "Ṭaṭ ṭvam asi." It is the identification of the illuminated Self with the Divine Self, and the recognition of this divine element in every human being, great or small, beautiful or ugly, weak or strong, in the saint as in the savage, in the ignorant as in the wise. It is the culminating point to which our illuminated thoughts can rise during meditation, to that soul-inspired state which brings us to the very threshold of the final union, of the triumph of the Spirit, when the illusion of matter is for ever vanquished.

The saints and wise men, in order to attain this height, usually employ a concrete object of adoration, the supreme Guru, the Mahāḍeva, whose lotus feet are placed on flames on sacred earth. In other words they contemplate an ideal in the image of which they recognise their Self. In the same way as the painter paints in his picture the likeness of the divine vision which has appeared to him; as the poet, inspired by a hero he has seen in his dreams,



composes his songs, so the soul also needs a model to help its growth; and that is why the man who is seeking spirituality must constantly keep himself face to face with the image of Him who is for us the living symbol of the beauty of the soul.

It follows of itself then, that if we would help the younger generation, we cannot do better than place before its eyes some great ideal, which will help it to cultivate the inner life, and give it the necessary inspiration. For by contemplating a great ideal we unconsciously place ourselves in harmony with it; we vibrate, if but for a moment, in consonance with it, and by it our own rhythm is transformed to a rhythm stronger and more beautiful. We unconsciously identify ourselves with that which we have set up as our ideal, and in this momentary identification we grow, our whole being expands in the atmosphere of beauty, and we issue forth from these hours of contemplation better and purer than we were before.

It is just in these hours of intimate meditation that we discover our Divinity, and the discovery enables us more clearly to discern our divine possibilities and powers.

It is very natural that we should seek more and more to renew this contact, which words cannot convey, with the God in us, and that we should to this end begin the work of purification; for we feel that we must render ourselves worthy of this contact in order to experience in all its fulness the unspeakable joy it can give. For do we not know

that only the pure in heart can hope to see that which is divine?

Here we have a great stimulus for the work necessary to change and influence our will, which, lighted by love, transforms our passive desire into an active and conscious energy. In other words, the will changes from the static to the kinetic state.

And so, awakened by love for that which we contemplate, the contact of which gives such profound satisfaction to our whole being, we find in beauty a stimulus which becomes an irresistible force for good, and which impels us to activity in systematic work for the culture of the soul.

This culture causes rapid growth of the powers of our will, and purifies our whole being, as we come more and more into harmony with the objects of our adoration; and the inner accumulation of strength finds an issue for the pouring out of itself in the path of service.

There is therefore no greater help towards spiritual growth than to recognise a something greater than ourselves, and to follow it with all the strength of which we are capable.

There is no source of such inexhaustible inspiration as the divine ideal, which Theosophy offers to us in the august image of the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion, the simple thought of whom makes our soul tremble with reverent and sacred joy.

What then, to the soul, can matter trials, troubles, conflicts, tempests, when it has before it the glorious vision of Those who guide the life of the world, and

when it has understood the reality and beauty of the path that leads to Their feet? No more doubt, no more fear is possible; precipices or verdant paths, pain or joy, all are the gifts of Their blessed hands, and all is well with us, for all these but lead us to Their feet.

The radiant vision of Their beauty is an unfailing, inexhaustible source of inspiration, which gives the unspeakable joy of service, together with that peace which lets in the light intense, and keeps it ever burning.

Is it not then true to say that there is no more powerful force than Beauty, nothing that has greater influence over us, no inspiration that is more uplifting?

The Russian writer Dostoievsky, the great unconscious Theosophist, was right when he said: "It is Beauty that will save the world."

**ADYAR PAMPHLETS**

**No. 68**

# **The Fall of Ideals**

BY

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**THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE**

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## The Fall of Ideals<sup>1</sup>

IN a world of illusion in which the law of evolution operates, nothing could be more natural than that the ideals of MAN—as a unit of the total, or mankind—should be for ever shifting. A part of the Nature around him, that Protean, ever changing Nature, every particle of which is incessantly transformed, while the harmonious body remains as a whole ever the same, like these particles man is continually changing, physically, intellectually, morally, spiritually. At one time he is at the topmost point of the circle of development; at another at the lowest. And, as he thus alternately rises and sinks, and his moral nature responsively expands or contracts, so will his moral code at one time embody the noblest altruistic and aspirational ideals, while at the other, the ruling conscience will be but the reflection of selfishness, brutality and faithlessness. But this, however, is so only on the external, illusionary plane. In their internal, or rather, *essential* constitution, both nature and man are at one, as their essence is identical. All grows and develops and strives toward perfection

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *Lucifer* Vol. V, December 1889.

on the former planes of externality or, as well said by a philosopher, is—"ever becoming"; but on the ultimate plane of the spiritual essence all Is, and remains therefore immutable. It is toward this eternal *Esse* that everything, as every being, is gravitating, gradually, almost imperceptibly, but as surely as the Universe of stars and worlds moves towards a mysterious point known to, yet still unnamed by, astronomy and called by the Occultists the *central Spiritual Sun*.

Hitherto, it was remarked in almost every historical age that a wide interval, almost a chasm, lay between practical and ideal perfection. Yet, as from time to time certain great characters appeared on earth who taught mankind to look beyond the veil of illusion, man learnt that the gulf was not an impassable one; that it is the province of mankind through its higher and more spiritual races to fill the great gap more and more with every coming cycle; for every man, as a unit, has it in his power to add his mite toward filling it. Yes; there are still men, who, notwithstanding the present chaotic condition of the moral world, and the sorry *débris* of the best human ideals, still persist in believing and teaching that the now *ideal* human perfection is no dream, but a law of divine nature; and that, had Mankind to wait even millions of years, still it must some day reach it and rebecome *a race of gods*.

Meanwhile, the periodical rise and fall of human character on the external planes takes place now, as it did before, and the ordinary average perception of

man is too weak to see that both processes occur each time on a higher plane than the preceding. But as such changes are not always the work of centuries, for often extreme changes are wrought by swift acting forces—*e.g.*, by wars, speculations, epidemics, the devastation of famines or religious fanaticism—therefore do the blind masses imagine that man ever was, is, and will be the same. To the eyes of us, moles, mankind is like our globe—seemingly stationary. And yet, both move in space and time with an equal velocity, around themselves and—*onward*.

Moreover, at whatever end of this evolution, from the birth of his consciousness, in fact, man was, and still is, the vehicle of a dual spirit in him—good and evil. Like the twin sisters of Victor Hugo's grand, posthumous poem *Satan*—the progeny issued respectively from Light and Darkness—the angel "Liberty" and the angel "Isis-Lilith" have chosen man as their dwelling on earth, and these are at eternal strife in him.

The Churches tell the world that "Man is born in sin," and John (first Epistle III. 8) adds that "He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning". Those who still believe in the rib-and-apple fable and in the rebellious angel "Satan," believe, as a matter of course, in a personal Devil—as a contrast in a dualistic religion—to a personal God. We, Theosophists of the Eastern school, believe in neither. Yet we go, perhaps, further still than the Biblical dead letter. For we say that while as *extra-cosmic* Entities there is neither god nor devil, that both



exist nevertheless. And we add that both dwell on earth in man, being in truth *the very man himself*, who is as a physical being the devil, the true vehicle of *evil*, and as a spiritual entity—God, or *good*. Hence to say to mankind: "Thou hast the devil," is to utter as metaphysical a truth as when saying to all its men: "Know ye not that God dwelleth in you?" Both statements are true. But we are at the turning point of the great social cycle, and it is the former fact which has the upper hand at present. Yet as—to paraphrase a Pauline text—"there be devils many. . . yet there is but one Satan," so while we have a great variety of devils constituting collectively mankind, of such grandiose Satanic characters as are painted by Milton, Byron and recently by Victor Hugo, there are few, if any. Hence, owing to such mediocrity, are the human ideals falling, to remain unreplaced; a prose-life as spiritually dead as the London November fog, and as alive with brutal materialism and vices, the seven capital sins forming but a portion of these, as that fog is with deadly microbes. Now we rarely find aspirations toward the eternal ideal in the human heart, but instead of it every thought tending toward the one central idea of our century, the great "I," *self* being for each the one mighty centre around which the whole universe is made to revolve and turn.

When the Emperor Julian—called the *Apostate* because, believing in the grand ideals of his forefathers, the Initiates, he would not accept the human

anthropomorphic form thereof—saw for the last time his beloved Gods appear to him, he wept. Alas, they were no longer the bright spiritual beings he had worshipped, but only the decrepit, pale and worn out shades of the Gods he had so loved. Perchance they were the prophetic vision of the departing ideals of his age, as also of our own cycle. These “Gods” are now regarded by the Church as *demons* and called so; while he who has preserved a poetical, lingering love for them, is forthwith branded as an Antichrist and a modern Satan.

Well, Satan is an elastic term, and no one has yet ever given even an approximately logical definition of the symbolical meaning of the name. The first to anthropomorphise it was John Milton; he is his true putative intellectual father, as it is widely conceded that the *theological* Satan of the Fall is the “Mind-born Son” of the blind poet. Bereft of his theological and dogmatic attributes Satan is simply an *adversary*; not necessarily an “arch fiend” or a “persecutor of men,” but possibly also a foe of evil. He may thus become a Saviour of the oppressed, a champion of the weak and poor, crushed by the minor devils (men), the demons of avarice, selfishness and hypocrisy. Michelet calls him the “Great Disinherited” and takes him to his heart. The giant Satan of poetical concept is, in reality, but the compound of all the dissatisfied and noble intellectuality of the age. But Victor Hugo was the first to intuitively grasp the occult truth. Satan, in his poem of that name, is a truly grandiose Entity, with enough of the

human in him to bring him within the grasp of average intellects. To realise the Satans of Milton and of Byron is like trying to grasp a handful of the morning mist; there is nothing *human* in them. Milton's Satan wars with angels, who are a sort of flying puppet, without spontaneity, pulled into the stage of being and of action by the invisible string of theological predestination; Hugo's Lucifer fights a fearful battle with his own terrible passions and again becomes an Archangel of Light, after the most awful agonies ever conceived by mortal mind and recorded by human pen.

All other Satanic ideals pale before his splendour. The Mephisto of Goethe is a true devil of theology; the Ahriman of Byron's *Manfred*—a too supernatural character, and even Manfred has little akin to the human element, great as was the genius of their Creator. All these images pale before Hugo's SATAN, who loves as strongly as he hates. Manfred and Cain are the incarnate *Protests* of downtrodden, wronged and persecuted individuality against the "World" and "Society"—those giant fiends and savage monsters of collective injustice. Manfred is the type of an indomitable will, proud, yielding to no influence, earthly or divine, valuing his full absolute freedom of action above any personal feeling or social consideration, higher than nature and all in it. But, with Manfred as with Cain, the Self, the "I," is ever foremost; and there is not a spark of the all-redeeming love in them, no more than of fear. Manfred will not submit even to the universal Spirit of

Evil; alone, face to face with the dark opponent of Ahura Mazdâh—Universal Light—Ahriman and his countless hosts of Darkness, he still holds his own. These types arouse in one intense wonder, awe-struck amazement by their all-defiant daring, but arouse no human feeling: they are *too supernatural ideals*. Byron never thought of vivifying his Archangel with that undying spark of love which forms—nay, must form—the essence of the “First-Born” out of the homogeneous essence of eternal Harmony and Light, and is the element of forgiving reconciliation, even in its (according to our philosophy) last terrestrial offspring—Humanity. Discord is the concomitant of differentiation, and Satan, being an evolution, must in that sense be an adversary, a contrast, being a type of chaotic matter. The loving essence cannot be extinguished but only perverted. Without this saving redemptive power, embodied in Satan, he simply appears the nonsensical failure of omnipotent and omniscient imbecility which the opponents of theological Christianity sneeringly and very justly make him: with it he becomes a thinkable Entity, the *Asuras* of the Purāṇic myths, the first *breaths* of Brahmā, who, after fighting the Gods and defeating them, are finally themselves defeated and then hurled on to the earth, where they incarnate in Humanity. Thus Satanic Humanity becomes comprehensible. After moving around his cycle of obstacles he may, with accumulated experiences, after all the throes of Humanity, emerge again into the light—as Eastern philosophy teaches.

If Hugo had lived to complete his poem, possibly with strengthened insight, he would have blended his Satanic concept with that of the Āryan races, which makes all minor powers, good or evil, born at the beginning and dying at the close of each "Divine Age". As human nature is ever the same, and sociological, spiritual and intellectual evolution is a question of step by step, it is quite possible that instead of catching one half of the Satanic ideal as Hugo did, the next great poet may get it wholly; thus voicing for his generation the eternal idea of Cosmic equilibrium so nobly emphasised in the Āryan mythology. The first half of that ideal approaches sufficiently to the human ideal to make the moral tortures of Hugo's Satan entirely comprehensible to the Eastern Theosophist. What is the chief torment of this great Cosmic Anarchist? It is the moral agony caused by such a duality of nature—the tearing asunder of the Spirit of Evil and Opposition from the undying element of primeval love in the Archangel. That spark of divine love for light and harmony, that no HATE can wholly smother, causes him a torture far more unbearable than his Fall and exile for protest and rebellion. This bright, heavenly spark, shining from Satan in the black darkness of his kingdom of moral night, makes him visible to the intuitive reader. It made Victor Hugo see him sobbing in superhuman despair, each mighty sob shaking the earth from pole to pole; sobs first of baffled rage that he cannot extirpate love for divine Goodness (God) from his

nature; then changing into a wail of despair at being cut off from that divine love he so much yearns for. All this is intensely human. This abyss of despair is Satan's salvation. In his *Fall*, a feather drops from his white and once immaculate wing, is lighted up by a ray of divine radiance and forthwith transformed into a bright Being, the Angel of LIBERTY. Thus, she is Satan's daughter, the child jointly of God and the fallen Archangel, the progeny of Good and Evil, of Light and Darkness, and God acknowledges this common and "sublime paternity" that unites them. It is Satan's daughter who saves him. At the acme of despair at feeling himself hated by LIGHT, Satan hears the divine words: "No; I hate thee not." Saith the Voice: "An angel is between us, and her deeds go to thy credit. Man, bound by thee, by her is now delivered."

O Satan, tu peux dire à present: je vivrai!  
Viens; l' Ange Liberté, c'est ta fille et la mienne;  
Cette paternité sublime nous unit! . . .

The whole conception is an efflorescence of metaphysical ideality. This white lotus of thought springs now, as in former ages, from the rottenness of the world of matter, generating *Protest* and LIBERTY. It is springing in our very midst and under our very eyes, from the mire of modern civilisation, the fecund bed of contrasting virtues. In this foul soil sprouted the germs which ultimately developed into all-denying protestators, Atheists, Nihilists, and Anarchists, men of the Terror. Bad, violent,

criminal some of them may be, yet no one of them could stand as the copy of Satan; but taking this heart-broken, hopeless, embittered portion of humanity in their collectivity, they are just Satan himself; for he is the ideal synthesis of all discordant forces and each separate human vice or passion is but an atom of his totality. In the very depths of the heart of this HUMAN Satanic totality burns the divine spark, all negations notwithstanding. It is called Love for HUMANITY, an ardent aspiration for a universal reign of Justice—hence a latent desire for light, harmony and goodness. Where do we find such a divine spark among the proud and the wealthy? In respectable Society and the correct, orthodox, so-called religious portion of the public, one finds but a predominating feeling of selfishness and a desire for wealth at the expense of the weak and the destitute, hence, as a parallel, indifference to injustice and evil. Before Satan, the incarnate PROTEST, repents and reunites with his fellow men in the common Brotherhood, all cause for protest must have disappeared from earth. And that can come to pass only when Greed, Bias, and Prejudice shall have disappeared before the elements of Altruism and Justice to all. Freedom, or Liberty, is but a vain word now all over the civilised globe; freedom is but a cunning synonym for oppression of the people in the name of the people, and it exists for castes, never for units. To bring about the reign of Freedom as contemplated by Hugo's Satan, the "Angel Liberty" has to be born simultaneously and by common love

and consent of the "highër" wealthy caste, and the "lower" classes—the poor; in other words, to become the progeny of "God" and "Satan," thereby reconciling the two.

But this is a Utopia—for the present. It cannot take place before the castes of the modern *Levites* and their theology—the Dead-Sea fruit of Spirituality—shall have disappeared; and the priests of the Future have declared before the whole world in the words of *their* "God":

Et j' efface la nuit sinistre, et rien n'en reste,  
Satan est mort, renaiss O LUCIFER CELESTE!





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No. 69

# Intuitional Consciousness

*A Lecture in a Course on Consciousness*

BY

FRANCESCA ARUNDALE

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## Intuitionnal Consciousness

CONSCIOUSNESS has been traced through the long path of its manifestation, from the flame to the spark, from the spark to its encasement in the various planes of matter, each downward plane marking an added veil, an added density to be overcome and conquered. The Self of man comes from the first Logos, it is a reflection of the Monad; and yet more than a reflection, as it is truly the Self, the germ of all that it will be when, having passed through all limitation, it shall be capable of Self-limitation, of Self-manifestation. Thus we see the spark becoming the threefold manifestation on the three planes of the descending path as *Ātmā*, *Buddhi*, *Manas*. But the Self has to descend still further into matter, for there are the planes of manifestation even lower than the *mānasic*. To conquer these is the work of the Self in its lowest unfoldment, as it reaches out to the astral and the physical. To accomplish this, a further reflection of the Self is necessary, and the mental divides itself into higher and lower, that which can still contact the spiritual and higher Self, and that

which reflects it in the lower, the field of concrete matter. There, then, again we get a triad, but this time a triad working in the densest limitation of matter, concrete mind, the feelings and emotions, and their field of action in the physical body. With the long processes of this unfoldment I have nothing to do; they have been fully dealt with in the earlier lectures of this series; it is sufficient for the purpose of this lecture to note that in this lower reflection there is the gradual realisation of the Self, and that the effect of evolution through the lower planes is that, while at the beginning of its course this lower looks upon itself as apart and separate from its surroundings, at the end it realises its spiritual Selfhood and identity with all. Thus the centre of consciousness is gradually transferred from the lower physical of the animal and savage man to the emotional and intellectual centres of the civilised and developed entity.

One thing must be remembered, and that is that the reflection of the Self in the lower triad is a trinity, that each of the powers or aspects of the One Self is represented, and that these are being developed simultaneously, so that the mortal man, as we may call this lower triad, unfolds the reflection of Ātmā, Buddhi, Manas, by expanding the centres of consciousness, till at last in the realisation of identity they are capable of being drawn into the higher. We have seen in the previous lectures the process of this unfolding; how the concrete, intellectual consciousness of the mortal person at last fixes its centre in the intellectual

consciousness of the immortal individual; how that which was external and concrete is seen in its inner aspects as internal and abstract, so that the root of knowing is seen as the knower, and that Self-realisation involves the knowing of the thing in itself of which the concrete is the manifestation in time.

In the present lecture we have to do with the next stage in the great unfoldment, the realisation of the intuitional consciousness, the vehicle through which it works in manifestation in time, and the world of Being to which it belongs. It is again important to remember that in manifestation we are dealing with a reflection, so that, just as we sought for the reflection of the higher intellectual consciousness of the Monad in its concrete aspects, so must we now seek for the next aspect of the Monad, the Buddhi aspect, in the plane that reflects it in its manifestation in time. The bliss aspect of the Monad shows itself in the mortal personality in love and joy, in the attraction that makes men seek one object rather than another. The plane of desire is the reflection of the buddhic plane in time and manifestation, and the nearest expression of the bliss aspect is the condition of pure and intense love which sometimes unites two persons, making them feel as one being in thought, word and action. It is in the astral reflection that we have to look for the first faint stirring of buddhic consciousness, and in this connection we must note that all planes and sub-planes of matter interpenetrate the physical, and are, as we may say, adjacent to it. This is very important, for the

consciousness of the Ego, drawn outwards by vibrations of the astral plane, causes responsive vibrations in the astral body, and these arouse faint answering thrills in the buddhic matter of which the astral is the reflection, and in this way the response in the buddhic vehicle is strengthened and developed.

Thus we see that the physical, astral, mental, buddhic, and nirvāṇic vehicles are all closely connected, and when we speak of the buddhic plane and the buddhic vehicle, we are not speaking of something that is afar off, but of that which is present with every man, here and now; and by unfolding the reflection of the Self we come into touch with the reality that lies behind it. The buddhic matter, which we call the buddhic body, must not, however, be thought of as a body similar to the physical body, that is to say as an enclosure; there is no hard and fast outline circumscribing the atoms of buddhic matter and thus creating a definite form. It should rather be conceived of as a vibrating centre with lines radiating in all directions. We have been told that the causal vehicle, or the body of the higher mental plane, is the only permanent body of the Ego in manifestation. The lower mental, the astral, and the physical disintegrate after each life, but the causal body may be regarded as the storehouse of the experiences garnered by the Ego in its earthly lives.

It is in this causal body that the buddhic sheath or centre is formed, and it is the nucleus of those permanent atoms which enable the Ego to descend into matter, carrying its experience from one life to another.

We have also been told that it is developed by the exercise of the mental powers of abstract thought, the highly intellectual and moral characteristics, developed in each life. It is the strengthening of this aspect of the Intellect in the causal body which gradually forms the buddhic centre, and, so long as the causal body lasts, the centre and its radiating lines remain as the nucleus of the permanent atoms.

In the course of the unfoldment of the Ego, however, the great mystery of Initiation takes place, and, when the Ego consciously enters the buddhic plane, the causal body itself disappears, that body which has been the home of the consciousness through life after life, in the higher as well as the physical world. It disappears; that is to say, it disintegrates, and the atoms of which it is composed are lost in the surrounding sea of mental matter.

Thus the buddhic sheath has no form, but is a raying out of matter in all directions, and to the developed seer the buddhic threads can be seen as running through all living organisms and holding them together. It is this disappearance of the causal body when a man passes through the first Initiation which gives the feeling at first, we are told, of having lost every touch with the planes below. The buddhic centre and the permanent atoms, however, remain; and these permanent atoms are the links by means of which the Ego can again emerge from the buddhic plane to the lower realms of manifested life.



Having spoken of the buddhic sheath, we may consider the characteristics of the plane from which it emanates. It is only by symbols that we can in any way image the conditions of this glorious realm. It has been described as the Christ plane of the human Spirit, a sphere of knowledge and love, where each man is most perfectly himself, and yet at the same time includes all others in himself, and is all others. A plane in which there is no exclusion, for all being interpenetrates, and no isolation is possible. It may be compared to a centre of energy with no excluding walls, and each entity, as he becomes conscious on this plane, is at once the centre as well as the out-raying energy. Truly it is the Christ plane, for it is the plane of *at-one-ment* and is the foundation of the much misunderstood doctrine of *Atonement*. The Christ, who is the perfected entity on this plane, shares His life with all, and through Him and from Him come the rays of life and love and wisdom that draw all men up to Him. It is the plane of Saviours, because from here there is no separation, but a constant sharing with others. The entity that has passed through the cross of manifestation in matter has become conscious through all form, and now exists as a conscious centre, able to vivify all that is below him, in very truth one with God and man. In no sense, however, is this at-one-ment vicarious; how could it be so if the nature of the Self be understood? The Christ of the buddhic plane is not a manifestation of the power of the Spirit for one only, it is the condition that is manifest

that all may attain, as in the words of the Great Initiate on earth, "that they may be one in Us".

The spark is the flame, and the expansion of consciousness that marks the entrance of the Initiate on to the buddhic plane is the realisation of the identity of the nature and being of the spark with that which is at once its source and centre.

The entering this condition of consciousness is often spoken of as entering the stream, for never can the man who has once realised this condition fall back to the state of worldliness which looks on the external as the real. He has touched the inner side of being, and although he may wander and delay, yet he can never lose the spiritual knowledge that has come to him from the divine plane.

In the title of this lecture mention is made of the intuitional consciousness, its vehicle and its world. We have seen somewhat of the nature of its world in the description of the powers and attributes of the buddhic plane, and the buddhic sheath has been spoken of as a radiating centre. Let us now see how that centre is related to the man as we know him in the present world of manifestation. What is the intuitional consciousness, how does it manifest in the world of sense and action, and how can it be strengthened and developed so that the Ego can realise itself on the buddhic plane? In the first place, it must be again noticed that all planes of matter are adjacent and co-existing. Physical, astral, mental, causal, buddhic and the planes beyond—all interpenetrate each other; the matter of which these

planes are composed forms the man as we see him in manifestation, and the life functions through all, more or less strongly as that life becomes fully conscious on the various planes. The Ego, triple in its nature as the spark of the flame, manifests this triplicity in the mortal person, and physical consciousness, emotional consciousness and higher mental consciousness reflect the three aspects of the immortal Ego, the Ātmā, the Buddhi and the Intellect. The emotional consciousness is what we have to deal with as the vehicle through which the Ego cognises the lower and becomes the master of feeling and desire. The astral plane is the field of buddhic manifestation in its lowest aspect. The principle of love and joy, of attraction, a going forth in desire, is Buddhi reflecting itself in Kāma. It is on the plane of desire that we must seek for the first stirring of vibrations to be carried on to the perfecting and strengthening of the powers of the buddhic vehicle. The characteristic of the buddhic plane is, as we have seen, unity, and it is the desire that makes for unity which is the first expression of the life passing from the lower to the higher form of consciousness. Love, therefore, may be said to be the means by which the buddhic sheath can be stirred into vibration. How faint is the first thrill that pulsates from physical love of wife or child; it is too much mixed with the separated *I* to be translated to the body of bliss where the *I* is as much the all as the centre. *My* wife, *my* child, *my* friend is the first reaching out of the separated self in manifestation to the self in union

with all. As that love becomes purer, as it expands so that the *I* is not thought of, and no return for its outflowing is desired, when love is given to benefit another and not to gain for self, then and then only does the thrill pass to the centre of union, and the buddhic sheath is formed for the expression of the God manifest.

The consciousness that is at first drawn outwards by the vibrations of the lower astral matter gradually responds to the vibrations of the higher, and we see great emotions, such as love and devotion to a superior, to a hero and a great personal ideal. When a man pours out this love to his ideal, looking for no reward, joyous to serve for the joy of giving himself in service, then arise the faint answerings in the buddhic matter, and the centre thrills and rays out in response. This may be said to be the aspect of Buḍḍhi, showing itself as love. On the astral plane, it feels the unity; it strives after it. Where an individual has no love there can be no vibration to start the buddhic thrill of response; it is pure, unselfish love which develops the bliss aspect, till at last not only is unity felt and striven for, but seen and known.

The development of this buddhic consciousness will show itself in many ways; we shall not pick out the one or two on whom to lavish our stores of love and devotion, but all will be near and dear, so all will be protected, and helped and revered as part of the great life. None so evil that we shrink from trying to draw near in help; none so weak that we would not strengthen.

Another means by which the buddhic consciousness may be developed is the strengthening of the centres of the causal body. As we have seen, the causal body is the vehicle of consciousness on the higher plane of mentality, the characteristic feature being knowledge in its abstract form. It is that aspect of the Self which seeks to know the reality of a thing, what it really is. It is not content with the external, but looks through the external to the reality—to what it is apart from the world of form. This seeking for abstract reality apart from form being the reverse of the process of evolution into form, it links itself to the inward and not the outward, and by retiring inwards it reaches to the plane of love or unity as the only reality, the one basis of all form.

Therefore is it necessary, if we would acquire the buddhic consciousness, not only to let our love pass beyond the external plane, but also our thought, to recognise the one life in all, not as a dead platitude but as a living reality. This recognition of unity will gather all into its mighty embrace, and love and wisdom become one. Meditation is the great unfolders of this power of Intuition. Through constant practice in the endeavour to rise beyond the lower to a higher form of consciousness, the lower begins to partake of the nature of that to which it aspires. All meditation draws the soul beyond the every-day concerns of time and space, it builds the stairway by which we climb to the larger life which awaits us, and enables us to reach that threshold where the unity is seen.

The intuitional consciousness will, therefore, show itself as the constant endeavour to expand the *I*, to bring all that which is external into the *Self*, so that nothing that lives or moves shall remain as separated or apart. The lowest animal, the flower and tree, the stone, the sage, the robber, and the slayer, will all find their place in this great embracing love, as parts in the great whole, my Self in evolution. No anger can disturb, no passions mar the serenity of one who sees himself in all. The changing forms of manifestation will be seen as aspects for time, of that which is beyond time and beyond manifestation.

The two means, therefore, by which any one may hope to advance to the buddhic unity are love and thought. Unselfish love, that spends itself in service to all, causes vibrations in the buddhic matter. The influences from the plane ray down, and the soul is bathed in joy that knows no words—unspeakable bliss.

This advance is also made possible by the development of the higher manas in the causal body. No thought can conceive the reality of the buddhic power, even within the causal faculties, and, once realised, it breaks up the material of the causal plane and it remains as the body of Buddhi; he who would function on the lower planes then makes anew the vehicles through which he would work. This is the secret of the first Initiation; *that* which has been the pilgrim through the many countless lives receives its liberation, and henceforward there is the body of bliss, which is the ever present home of the individual who has but to descend at will in a causal body made

afresh each time he returns to the lower planes of manifestation. The intuitional consciousness reflects itself as the power to discriminate clearly and immediately, with certainty and knowledge. It is the growth of experience in love and wisdom, just as instinct is the growth of passion and physical desire to live; both Intuition and instinct have a common basis as the reflections of the higher, but it is only the pure emotions, the unselfish love, that can grow the beautiful flower that may bloom in the buddhic region, while instinct arises from desire for self-preservation, and is the guide of the consciousness in the lower worlds only. Pure emotion, loving devotion, unselfish service, are the means of unfoldment, and no one must depend on intuitional knowledge where there is selfish love and desire for personal gain. The Intuition is the all-seeing vision that can catch the light from the plane of Buddhic and so illumine the path that the soul with unerring certainty shall press onwards, sure in its knowledge and power. But who shall tell of the joy that he may feel who has once secured entrance to the glories of that region of unity. Earth and water, land and sea, the grass, the flowers, the insects that flit from blossom to blossom, all are felt and known as one; there is then the utter certainty that the idea of the separate self is a delusion. Henceforward all nature holds a different meaning for him. He creates a world of beauty around himself, for love is the artist which transforms and transfigures the unreal and the transient so that the real and the immortal can be sensed in

all. Blessed indeed is such a one, and blessed are those that can dwell in his presence; he becomes at once a channel through which the greater life may show itself in all its glory, for the love of the Brotherhood of Love can pass unfettered through his pure emotion. The veil has been torn asunder and he has at last reaped the knowledge which comes to the Ego in its first unfoldment on the buddhic plane. Harvested from the experiences of many lives, he has gained the power to sympathise with all, and has become a co-worker with those Saviours of mankind who have their dwelling on the plane of Bliss and Wisdom. Such is the man in whom the faculty of the Intuition shines out, such is the power which he can exercise, beyond the limitations of sense, beyond the critical judgment of the mind. From the realm of wisdom he brings the discriminative vision which unites him in love and sympathy with all, and to him the many have become the One.





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# Man's Waking Consciousness

*A Lecture in a Course on Consciousness*

BY

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## Man's Making Consciousness

IF I were to endeavour to trace in detail all the stages through which the evolving life of the Logos moves onwards to its destiny, I should not only need many more lectures than the one allotted to me, but also a keener vision than that which at present I possess. Within the limits of one short hour the survey must necessarily be broad, and much knowledge must already be assumed. I shall, however, try to put my subject as simply as possible—confining myself to broad statements which I believe to be of general application, though often requiring modification as regards details and special conditions.

To recapitulate briefly the processes by which man acquires what is known as his waking consciousness, let us think for a moment of the Logos as an immense Flame of light, one great all-embracing Consciousness, existing, perhaps, as a spark in some still more vivid light, but in itself complete, cognising its own perfection on its own plane. Living in itself as an undivided whole, this Flame wills to live consciously in all its innumerable parts; for there is no ultimate perfection of a whole until each smallest

part attains the stature of the whole of which it has been a part. And so this Flame—existing in its own Divinity, or dwelling (as Theosophists might say) on the divine plane of nature—begins to throw out its consciousness, to evolve from itself the planes of its nature, on each of which its constituent parts shall evolve as the Flame itself has evolved in the dim and distant past. The Flame reproduces the conditions of its own evolution, conditions which it has built up into its own nature, and spreads them outwards—through an act of will spoken of in Theosophical literature as the Third Life-Wave—as the various planes of nature, in some of which we are living consciously. Out rushes the life of the Flame, joyous in the task it is destined to accomplish; and the busy activity, sending out the parts on this journey towards self-conscious Divinity, is seen in the myriad sparks scintillating and shining in their unconscious splendour. These sparks, Monads, consciousnesses individualised from the one divine Consciousness, are the future Flames destined to bring forth future universes; and you and I, sparks of our own Divinity, are travelling on the path which, leading to our own perfection, shall bring forth many perfections in all the life which has gathered round us on our upward climb.

The Flame itself, living on the plane of Flame, in that region of nature where Divinity alone may dwell, sends down its life on to the plane of sparks—the monadic, separates itself into its constituent parts, each of which is a reflection at a lower level of itself

on the higher. Just as the Flame itself has within it the threefold aspect of its own development, the period of its creation, the period of its growth, the period of its accomplishment—Sat, Chit, Ānanda—so the Monads, parts growing into the semblance of the whole from which they come, not only receive from the Logos the conditions of their growth, but reflect from Him His threefold aspect as Manas, Buddhi and Ātmā, reflections which manifest as life on the mānasic, buddhic and ātmic, planes of nature. Thus consciousness, residing as to the part unconsciously on the plane of Divinity, feels its way outwards, first to the plane of nature in which the Divine is seen in its individualised aspect—the monadic—then ever onwards through the ātmic, buddhic and higher mānasic planes of pure Spirit (Will), Wisdom, or Intuition, in its highest form, and Mind in its aspect of Creative Activity. We must remember that all the while the divine Flame is behind the monadic spark, just as the Monad is behind the vestures of these three planes which it has assumed on its road towards the outermost circumference of manifestation drawn by its Divinity. The combined vesture of the ātmic, buddhic and higher mānasic planes is generally spoken of as the jīvātmā, or ego, for the life enshrouded in the matter of these three planes is the only reflection of the ultimate Divinity which consciousness in the densest planes shall know for ages upon ages of slow though steady growth.

But the outpouring of life does not stop when the higher mānasic plane has been reached, for the divine

Flame has made other manifestations of itself in which its consciousness is to function, that it may know of the entirety of its nature. And so the *jīvātmā*, working through the Second Life-Wave of the Logos, sends its consciousness outwards through the second division of the *mānasic* plane—the lower—through the astral, finally reaching the physical, which is the densest plane of nature, the outermost circle of the life of the Logos.

Thus the Flame, which is Divinity unmanifested, becomes Divinity in manifestation, stretching its consciousness to the extreme limits which its force can reach. But the consciousness living in the planes builded by one Life-Wave, and growing through the instrumentality of another, is not *self*-conscious save on the plane of its own Divinity, and then only as the undivided whole. Thus we might say that this Flame, or Logos, is Self-conscious in His own Divine Nature, and that His evolution consists in His becoming, in His aspect of separated units of consciousness (Monads), Self-conscious in each portion of His Being, so that the part may become as the whole already is, and may, in the fulness of its own time, send out its Life-Waves to multiply itself into many.

It would take too long, and would indeed be beyond my power, to trace the life as it proceeds downwards, or rather outwards, in its descent into matter. Let us take it at its turning-point in the mineral kingdom, from which it proceeds upwards through the vegetable, into the animal, and thence into the human, gaining self-consciousness on each plane as it ascends, or as it

turns inwards, reaping the harvest which the Third Life-Wave has provided for its garnering, finally meeting the last outpouring from the Logos, "Heaven kissing Earth," which welcomes back the wanderer to its newly-gained self-conscious Divinity. I have called the mineral kingdom the turning-point, because, while consciousness still sleeps in the bosom of its own infinity while living in its coarsest sheath, there is the faintest sign of the dawning of that self-consciousness for which it has made its long and weary pilgrimage. It sleeps, but it stirs uneasily, as a man may stir uneasily in some vivid, strange and fearful dream; and Professor Bose of Calcutta has shown in the mineral these stirrings, faint preludes as they are to the mighty stirrings of God awakened in man.

The earthquake, the storm, the rumblings of the volcano—these are the life-signs of the mineral, by which the Monads, in "the silence and the darkness" of their existence on their own plane, first hear of the approach of the messengers they have sent out to bring them knowledge of their surroundings. Busy indeed is the life as it feels itself in the kingdom of which it is the king, and as the forms heave and roll and clash, are rent asunder or crash together, consciousness stirs, little thrills begin to send their wavelets inwards, and the varieties of experiences begin to mark out consciousness, so that the Monads, silently watching the life as it grows, gradually feel their self-conscious way into separated forms. In this way does the consciousness within respond to the



impacts upon its vehicles, and as the response begins to grow more articulate, more coherent, the mineral form breaks up, so that the wanderer from his divine home may gain more experience than the fetters of the mineral kingdom permit—having experienced the fetters, having lived self-consciously within their narrow limits.

A very poor self-consciousness, you will say. Yes, but it was the beginning without which the physical consciousness could not have come; without which the circulation of our blood, the beatings of the heart, the automatic birth and decay of cells—now all sub-conscious, but, under other conditions, within what may be called the then “waking” consciousness—would claim an attention which now we may concentrate on an inner plane of consciousness. In the mineral kingdom physical consciousness reigns supreme, and there are only the very slightest evidences that the consciousness is being pushed inwards to the astral plane and coming thence as a reflection into the physical. But even these slightest tremors imperatively demand a finer vehicle, and the call of the life, which is the master of its mineral form, is for some more separated existence than the mineral kingdom affords.

Then it is that the life flows into the vegetable world on its upward path, and the consciousness, hitherto sleeping, begins to dream the dreams that precede waking, and the stirring of the consciousness on the astral plane, while unconscious in its own plane, sends out small pleasure-pain judgments to

which the finer matter of the vegetable forms more readily responds. But the seat of consciousness, the dwelling-place of its waking state, is still the physical plane and the physical plane alone, and indeed its waking condition is rather that of an awareness, a growing awareness, than that of the perception of the animal and of the human being.

Passing through the experiences appropriate to the vegetable kingdom, the life presses itself still more self-consciously to the inner plane—the astral—receiving, as a result of its increased pressure, more decided impacts on its physical form, more definite repulsions and attractions. Then comes a further step upwards into the animal kingdom, in which the channels, open between the astral and the physical worlds, give the animals not merely astral counterparts to their physical bodies, but astral bodies, in some of which, as regards the highest animals, self-consciousness has at last found its dwelling-place. Here in the animal world memory is the stirring of the mental permanent atom, around which a body is gradually being built as the life presses ever inwards.

Memory below the animal need not be considered from the standpoint of our present subject, but in the animal it begins to provide the mental consciousness which man will need to use. In the case of the animal world the waking consciousness, while in the physical brain, is made up not only of the ordinary physical-plane impacts, but also of the workings of the life on the astral plane in its

physical manifestation. We shall not speak of the animal being self-conscious on the astral plane, for that would mean that it is as conscious of the astral world as it is of the physical world. But it may safely be said that in its waking physical state, it lives to a large extent under the sway of the impacts of its astral body translated into physical terms, such impacts being either from the surrounding astral world or reactions from physical-plane conditions.

The same remarks apply to any mental impressions to which it may be able to respond. Still less has it any self-consciousness on the mental plane of the mental world around it, but it has faint stirrings in the mental permanent atom, due either to impacts from its own sphere or to those from the plane next below. In the case of the animal, the earthquakes and the shocks which were referred to in connection with the mineral kingdom, are represented in the passions and emotions which come from the awakening of its astral consciousness. And some day, when a portion of the consciousness which has been sent down into manifestation has gained sufficient experience, has become strong and comparatively self-conscious, it reaches upwards through some great and unexampled stirring to the Third Great Force, or Life-Wave, on which the Monad comes to assume more definite and complete control of its lower vehicles through itself as the *jīvātma*, in its manifestation on the three higher planes of nature—the higher *mānasic*, the *buddhic*, and the *ātmic*. On the plane of *Manas* does this great meeting take

place, the individualisation of consciousness, so that the Monad, through its ego, abides in its own separated form, the first clear image which has up to this time existed of its future vehicle. The Monad assumes charge of its own separated portion of consciousness, and evolves through it into a Flame which is the likeness of the whole from which it sprang.

Thus does the animal become man, and thus do we see that man's waking consciousness is composed of his astral and mental consciousness working in the physical consciousness which only emerges above the line of unconsciousness when its harmony is disturbed—with the result that it ceases to function automatically—or when through certain practices of Yoga it is deliberately brought within the region of the waking consciousness.

I have already suggested that it is necessary to discriminate between consciousness functioning self-consciously on any plane, and the reflection of the stirrings of consciousness from the higher to the lower, or from the lower to the higher. Each plane of nature, as we have already been told in previous lectures, consists of seven sub-planes, each sub-plane increasing in density and coarseness as there is approach to the plane below. The result is that the upward-pressing life has first to make its way through the denser regions of a plane before it may reach the finer levels. So the primeval man, the savage, receives the impacts which give him the astral portion of his own individual waking consciousness from the lower divisions of

the astral plane; for the life, though it has just penetrated into the mental world above, has not yet made the channels which shall convey the conscious message from the higher regions of the astral. When living in the physical body, when the seat of consciousness is normally in the physical brain, the ordinary savage is hardly awake at all in his astral vehicle, even during the sleep condition; and it is not until death comes that he may be said to live, and then only for a short time, self-consciously on the astral plane. The man who is more highly evolved, however, has represented in his normal waking consciousness not only the higher regions of the astral plane, but also the lower regions of the mental plane. And as he gains mastery over these lower regions, through asserting the dominance of the higher, his waking consciousness gradually begins to include a knowledge of the world of these two planes, as he already has a knowledge of the world of the physical plane.

In the ordinary waking consciousness of the average man, he *is* his feelings, he *is* his thoughts, for the Self in these regions has not yet been distinguished from the Not-Self; but as the consciousness retires inwards it is seen apart from its vehicles, and so man becomes the master of his mind, the master of his desires; for he sees that these are but his bodies which, in the infinite future, when themselves ideal and perfect, he will use as planes of nature, in which will function his unity in its separated aspects—his divinity in its resultant sparks.

The activity, the stirring, of the astral and mental consciousness depends ultimately, of course, upon the great upward sweep towards the goal of unity. But the struggle of the stirring is of interest, in that we clearly see how the qualities of the downward stretching into matter differ in quality from those appropriate to the tending upwards towards Spirit. The astral constituents, for example, emotions of all kinds—moral, æsthetic, personal—work through the nervous system, into the brain-cells of the physical vehicle; and their effect is either to press the life backwards (at least to keep the life from flowing upwards), or to push it upwards until it reaches Buddhi. Thus the mind, which works through the astral on to the physical brain, is, if the emotions are good, pressed forward so that it touches the buddhic level of consciousness through the causal plane (the higher mānasic), while, if the emotions are of what we call the passionate variety, the mind is drawn downwards and becomes entangled with the body, thus producing a condition which is often dangerous.

It must also be noticed that the activities of the mental body especially, caused by changes in the mental-plane consciousness, depend for their reproduction in the physical brain upon the actual physical development of the brain itself. Before the age of seven years, for example, there is comparatively little inter-communication between the large nucleated cells of the brain; and though the activities of the mental body may be quite considerable, they will not

enter what is called the waking consciousness, which has its seat in the physical brain, because the brain has not yet grown so as to provide a vehicle of sufficient delicacy. Hence there is little in the way of reasoning before the age of seven, so far as the waking consciousness is concerned, though the power of observation will be well-marked and the senses of considerable acuteness.

We see, therefore, that the waking consciousness depends to a very considerable extent, I might almost say entirely, upon the development and condition of the physical brain. The astral constituents are those first brought clearly through, because these have been longer under control, or at least within the waking consciousness; and it is for this reason that the education of a child begins with observation and perception, and with training the sense of pleasure-pain, along the line of education, before the faculty of reasoning is sought to be established. As the child grows older, more and more constituents enter into the waking consciousness, as the brain learns to respond more clearly and gains in complexity in order to meet the ever-increasing demands of the stirrings of consciousness in the inner planes.

The physical brain, in fact, is like a musical instrument on which the *jīvātma* plays, and the music he is able to make depends to a considerable degree upon the power of the instrument to respond accurately to his intentions. Thus, within the waking consciousness, a disordered brain may distort the impressions from the inner planes, just as a piano which is out of

tune will distort the music which it is desired to produce. The disorder of the brain may work in either of two ways. It may produce unrecognisable travesties of the realities beneath, or it may for the time—especially if over-strained—bring through visions of the inner glories which shall be a revelation to the outer world. But the disorder remains, and the risk of madness in either case is great, *i.e.*, the risk of the brain being to so great an extent disordered that the waking consciousness consists only of distorted impressions from within and from without.

Let us now turn to the consideration of the abnormal conditions of the waking consciousness which are classified, in the programme of the present lecture, under the heading "Genius". We may roughly distinguish three very distinct types of genius, each having its own special source of manifestation, but all depending upon some special upward stirring, calling down from some finer plane of matter a response in terms of infinitely wider consciousness. The genius proper, for example, he who from time to time possesses sudden and far-reaching ideas, or who receives inspirations in the shape of creative forces showing themselves in invention, obtains his illumination from the higher mānasic plane, a is reproducing the activity of the ego on the plane of its activity—the causal. A flash of the causal-body consciousness comes down and vivifies the whole mental process in a most extraordinary way, and we call this vivification or illumination genius.



It must be noticed, however, that a very highly organised brain is an indispensable preliminary to genius, for there must be the strong upward striving ere the downward response will be possible. And the fact that at our present stage of evolution the various brain-processes are by no means so completely developed as to provide a normal means of communication with the finer planes, has the effect of causing genius to be unstable, because the brain itself is in a state of unstable equilibrium—now making its connection with the inner worlds, now losing it. The preliminary sparks and flashes, before the two poles of an electric magnet are carefully adjusted, will give us an idea of the way in which genius acts.

If the brain be very delicately organised, the pressure from within, while producing flashes of genius, may at times cause the vagaries of genius which are so familiar to us, and may give rise to certain aberrations or fixed ideas, which often seem so incongruous in the man of genius. The brain has not as yet become the perfect mechanism which will afford a perfect means of communication between the higher and the lower, and the aberrations, vagaries and flashes of genius are the signs of the struggle of the soul towards a self-consciousness wider than those it has hitherto known. Perhaps we may even think that they are the counterparts on the higher levels of the violent physical upheavals of which I spoke in connection with the mineral kingdom.

The second aspect of genius to which I would draw attention is that of the saint, he who lives from time

to time in those raptures and ecstasies described in Professor James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*. In this case, it is not the causal consciousness which is brought down, but the consciousness working on the buddhic plane. The higher emotions working in the higher levels of the astral plane send out their call to the consciousness stirring on the buddhic plane, and the result is an outpouring of buddhic consciousness, which still further stimulates the highest sub-planes of the astral and causes a rapture, the reflection of that aspect of the unity which is the dominating influence of buddhic plane life. Here, as in the former case, the delicately balanced brain will not permit of the communication being complete and continuous, and so in this case also there are the same aberrations and vagaries referred to in the former condition of genius.

The third aspect is that of the hero, he who appeals to the ātmic consciousness, with the result that a flash of ātmic consciousness enters the physical brain itself and causes the heroic action. Here also the brain must have considerable development, the result of action of a noble character in past lives. In this way the brain becomes specially sensitive to vibrations from the ātmic plane, and, in times of stress and of emergency, the appeal, ringing out with the force of many lives of action behind it, imperatively commands the flash of Ātmā to direct into what the world calls heroism the action which has to be performed. It is obvious in this case also that the aberrations referred to above must similarly be present, and the hero of the moment is by no means necessarily the

hero in his everyday life. At his existing stage of evolution the appeal cannot be made continuously, and so the heroic stage can be reached but fitfully. With the seat of physical action, the brain proper, so inadequately developed, we must not imagine that the astral or mental consciousnesses themselves are deficient. These too must have reached a certain level, or the action could not be heroic, for astral and mental constituents enter into heroism, just as astral and mental constituents enter into the being of the saint. But the dominant factor in each case determines the mode of the expression of the genius, of that higher condition of the waking consciousness which with us can be but fitful and spasmodic.

It now becomes increasingly apparent why, from one standpoint, the *jīvātma*, the ego, the representation of the Monad, contains within itself the triple aspect of *Ātmā*, *Buddhi*, *Manas*. Each of these vehicles will respond, when the time comes, to the special direction given by the spark of the divine Flame to its growing self-consciousness, and each vehicle is itself a reflection of that triple aspect of the great Flame itself—*Sat*, *Chit*, *Ānanda*, or whatever other designations may be appropriate, under varying conditions of manifestation. We see, therefore, that the triplicity of manifested consciousness enters into the life-stream flowing upwards to bring self-consciousness to its own Divinity, and that the triplicity, with one special branch dominant, is within the waking consciousness of the growing spark in an ever-increasing degree. From this we may conclude that, even at its

earliest outpouring or manifestation, each Monad was born under some special aspect of the Divinity, as a man is born under a special star ; and we may expect that the full glory of the Flame in all its Self-conscious Divinity contains within itself a dominant sound, the sound of its own birth-aspects.

It is not within my province to deal with the waking consciousness of man beyond the mortal bodies. Others will speak of the beauties of that waking consciousness which is the glorious possession of the soul which is nearing its perfection, of the waking consciousness which embraces the causal, or the buddhic, or the âtmic planes: These are of the immortal Individual, and we in the present lecture of the series are confined within the limits of the mortal person.

Let me, therefore, in conclusion, endeavour to begin the bridge which shall span the gulf between the mortal person and the immortal Individual, by making a few suggestions as to the control and preliminary development of that part of the waking consciousness which includes the astral and the mental consciousness.

We are concerned with three great departments in our ordinary waking consciousness: the mind, the emotions, the physical body. Most people, as I have already said, *are* their minds, *are* their emotions, *are* their bodies. But, as has been said in *At the Feet of the Master*, the body is our horse ; and we may imagine ourselves as driving a team of three—the horse of the body, the horse of the emotions, and

the horse of the mind. The "we" is each individual *jīvātma* or ego, which is the reflection of the divine Flame, the "will" to manifest and to multiply. But *we* must drive, or we shall be dragged; and the science of growing life consists in the making of deliberate effort to hold and to control the forces of Nature, for such holding and controlling is the acquiring of self-consciousness. This effort is the science of Yoga, Hatha Yoga, when begun from below, Rāja Yoga when begun from above, and in ordinary English we may speak of it as meditation.

Meditation may be said to consist in growing accustomed to the instrument in connection with which the meditation takes place, in gradually learning how to draw out from the instrument its various capacities and possibilities. And meditation therefore means deliberately and intelligently exercised attention from the higher to the lower. Creative attention is that which renders the various vehicles more sensitive to the finer vibrations from the less dense planes of nature; and it is this kind of attention through which our will must work, rather than through that form of attention which seeks to retard the process of self-consciousness by maintaining the coarser, denser forms of manifestation. It is our business, therefore, to direct the waking consciousness towards the higher, and not towards the lower, by being alert, in all our daily occupations whatever they may be, and in spending a certain amount of time each day in arousing the mind and the emotions at the command of the

will. We do this by *directing* the thought and the feeling towards certain definite objects, through certain definite channels, and in this way the waking consciousness grows more alert, more *self-conscious*, and in its growth expands.

Meditation affects the mind by gradually endowing it with (i) one-pointedness, (ii) flexibility, (iii) obedience. Meditation affects the emotions by endowing them with serenity, by cultivating the higher emotions and by eradicating the lower. And the result of such a meditation, sedulously performed, is to give an alertness to the physical brain, and consequently a promptitude of action which is ever the mark of growing self-consciousness.

Thus does consciousness work its way through sheath after sheath, first of matter of ever-increasing density, then of matter of ever-decreasing density, from the unconscious to the increasingly self-conscious. And as the Self becomes conscious on the various planes of manifestation, he withdraws inwards, leaving below the level of waking consciousness all that he has learned to master and to control. Inwards he retires, realising himself in plane after plane of finer and finer matter, until the spark has become a Flame, which finally shines in all its glory on its own plane, as did the Flame from which it came. Then comes its turn to send out its waves of growth and power, that all the life within its nature, all the life below the level of its waking consciousness (which is the plane of its Divinity) may grow as the Flame itself has grown. So does the

unconscious part, without whose presence the whole would not have become a whole, receive the reward of its service, blossoming out into a self-sufficient unity as the bud expands into the full-blown flower.

ADYAR PAMPHLETS

No. 71

# Spiritual Progress

BY

H. P. BLAVATSKY

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## Spiritual Progress

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI'S well-known lines

Does the road wind up-hill all the way ?

Yes, to the very end.

Does the journey take the whole long day ?

From morn till night, my friend.

are like an epitome of the life of those who are truly treading the path which leads to higher things. Whatever differences are to be found in the various presentations of the Esoteric Doctrine, as in every age it donned a fresh garment, different both in hue and texture to that which preceded ; yet in every one of them we find the fullest agreement upon one point—the road to spiritual development. One only inflexible rule has been ever binding upon the neophyte, as it is binding now—the *complete* subjugation of the lower nature by the higher. From the Vedas and Upanishats to the recently published *Light on the Path*, search as we may through the Bibles of every race and cult, we find but one only way—hard, painful, troublesome—by which man can gain the true spiritual insight. And how can it be otherwise, since all religions and all philosophies are but the variants of the first teachings of

the One Wisdom, imparted to men at the beginning of the cycle by the Planetary Spirit?

The true Adept, the developed man, must, we are always told, *become*—he cannot be made. The process is therefore one of growth through evolution, and this must necessarily involve a certain amount of pain.

The main cause of pain lies in our perpetually seeking the permanent, and not only seeking, but acting as if we had already found the unchangeable in a world of which the one certain quality we can predicate is constant change; and always, just as we fancy we have taken a firm hold upon the permanent, it changes within our very grasp, and pain results.

Again, the idea of growth involves also the idea of disruption; the inner being must continually burst through its confining shell or encasement, and such a disruption must also be accompanied by pain, not physical, but mental and intellectual.

And this is how it is, in the course of our lives, the trouble that comes upon us is always just the one we feel to be the hardest that could possibly happen—it is always the one thing we feel we cannot possibly bear. If we look at it from a wider point of view, we shall see that we are trying to burst through our shell at its one vulnerable point; that our growth, to be real growth, and not the collective result of a series of excrescences, must progress evenly throughout, just as the body of a child grows; not first the head and then a hand, followed perhaps by a leg, but in all directions at once, regularly and imperceptibly. Man's tendency is to

cultivate each part separately, neglecting the others in the meantime; every crushing pain is caused by the expansion of some neglected part, which expansion is rendered more difficult by the effects of the cultivation bestowed elsewhere.

Evil is often the result of over-anxiety, and men are always trying to do too much; they are not content to leave well alone, to do always just what the occasion demands and no more; they exaggerate every action, and so produce karma to be worked out in a future birth.

One of the subtlest forms of this evil is the hope and desire of reward. Many there are who, albeit often unconsciously, are yet spoiling all their efforts by entertaining this idea of reward, and allowing it to become an active factor in their lives and so leaving the door open to anxiety, doubt, fear, despondency—failure.

The goal of the aspirant for spiritual wisdom is entrance upon a higher plane of existence; he is to become a new man, more perfect in every way than he is at present, and if he succeeds, his capabilities and faculties will receive a corresponding increase of range and power, just as in the visible world we find that each stage in the evolutionary scale is marked by increase of capacity.

This is how it is that the Adept becomes endowed with the marvellous powers that have been so often described; but the main point to be remembered is, that these powers are the natural accompaniments of existence on a higher plane of evolution, just as the

ordinary human faculties are the natural accompaniments of existence on the ordinary human plane.

Many persons seem to think that Adeptship is not so much the result of radical development as of additional construction; they seem to imagine that an Adept is a man who, by going through a certain plainly defined course of training, consisting of minute attention to a set of arbitrary rules, acquires first one power and then another, and when he has attained a certain number of these powers is forthwith dubbed an Adept. Acting on this mistaken idea they fancy that the first thing to be done towards attaining Adeptship is to acquire "powers"—clairvoyance and the power of leaving the physical body and travelling to a distance are among those which fascinate the most.

To those who wish to acquire such powers for their own private advantage, we have nothing to say; they fall under the condemnation of all who act for purely selfish ends. But there are others who, mistaking effect for cause, honestly think that the acquirement of abnormal powers is the only road to spiritual advancement. These look upon our Society as merely the readiest means to enable them to gain knowledge in this direction, considering it as a sort of occult academy, an institution established to afford facilities for the instruction of would-be miracle-workers. In spite of repeated protests and warnings, there are some minds in whom this notion seems ineradicably fixed, and they are loud in their expressions of disappointment when they find that what had

been previously told them is perfectly true ; that the Society was founded to teach no new and easy paths to the acquisition of "powers" ; and that its only mission is to re-kindle the torch of truth, so long extinguished for all but the very few, and to keep that truth alive by the formation of a fraternal union of mankind, the only soil in which the good seed can grow. The Theosophical Society does indeed desire to promote the spiritual growth of every individual who comes within its influence, but its methods are those of the ancient R̥shis, its tenets those of the oldest Esotericism ; it is no dispenser of patent nostrums, composed of violent remedies which no honest healer would dare to use.

In this connection we would warn all our members, and others who are seeking spiritual knowledge, to beware of persons offering to teach them easy methods of acquiring psychic gifts ; such gifts are indeed comparatively easy of acquirement by artificial (*laukika*) means, but fade out as soon as the nerve-stimulus exhausts itself. The real seership and Adeptship, which is accompanied by true psychic development (*lokoṭṭara*), once reached is never lost.

It appears that various societies have sprung into existence since the foundation of the Theosophical Society, profiting by the interest the latter has awakened in matters of psychic research, and endeavouring to gain members by promising them easy acquirement of psychic powers. In India we have long been familiar with the existence of hosts of sham ascetics of all descriptions, and we fear that there is

fresh danger in this direction, here, as well as in Europe and America. We only hope that none of our members, dazzled by brilliant promises, will allow themselves to be taken in by self-deluded dreamers, or, it may be, wilful deceivers.

To show that some real necessity exists for our protests and warnings, we may mention that we have recently seen, enclosed in a letter from Benares, copies of an advertisement just put forth by a so-called "Mahātmā". He calls for "eight men and women who know English and any of the Indian vernaculars well"; and concludes by saying that "those who want to know particulars of the work and the *amount of pay*" should apply to his address, with enclosed postage stamps! Upon the table before us lies a reprint of *The Divine Pymander*, published in England last year, and which contains a notice to *Theosophists who may have been disappointed in their expectations of Sublime Wisdom being freely dispensed by HINDŪ MAHĀTMAS*, cordially inviting them to send in their names to the Editor, who will see them, "after a short probation," admitted into an Occult Brotherhood, who "teach *freely* and WITHOUT RESERVE all they find worthy to receive". Strangely enough, we find in the very volume in question Hermes Trismegistus saying:

"For this only, O Son, is the way to *Truth*, which our progenitors travelled in; and by which making their journey, they at length attained to the good. It is a venerable way and plain, but hard and difficult for the soul to go in that is in the body.

*“Wherefore we must look warily to such kind of people, that being in ignorance they may be less evil for fear of that which is hidden and secret.”*

It is perfectly true that some Theosophists have been (through nobody's fault but their own) greatly disappointed because we have offered them no short cut to Yoga Vidyā, and there are others who wish for practical work. And, significantly enough, those who have done least for the Society are loudest in fault-finding. Now, why do not these persons, and all our members who are able to do so, take up the serious study of Mesmerism? Mesmerism has been called the Key to the Occult Sciences, and it has this advantage, that it offers peculiar opportunities for doing good to mankind. If in each of our Branches we were able to establish a homœopathic dispensary with the addition of mesmeric healing, such as has already been done with great success in Bombay, we might contribute towards putting the science of medicine in this country on a sounder basis, and be the means of incalculable benefit to the people at large.

There are others of our Branches, besides the one at Bombay, that have done good work in this direction, but there is room for infinitely more to be done than has yet been attempted. And the same is the case in various other departments of the Society's work. It would be a good thing if the members of each Branch would put their heads together, and seriously consult as to what tangible steps they can take to further the declared objects of the Society.



In too many cases the members of the Theosophical Society content themselves with a somewhat superficial study of its books, without making any real contribution to its active work. If the Society is to be a power for good in this and other lands, it can only bring about this result by the active co-operation of every one of its members, and we would earnestly appeal to each of them to consider carefully what possibilities of work are within his power, and then to set about earnestly carrying them into effect. Right thought is a good thing, but thought alone does not count for much unless it is translated into action. There is not a single member in the Society who is not able to do something to aid the cause of Truth and universal Brotherhood; it only depends on his own will, to make that something an accomplished fact.

Above all we would reiterate the fact, that the Society is no nursery for incipient Adepts; teachers cannot be provided to go round and give instruction to various Branches on the different subjects which come within the Society's work of investigation; the Branches must study for themselves; books are to be had, and the knowledge there put forth must be practically applied by the various members; thus will be developed self-reliance and reasoning powers. We urge this strongly; for appeals have reached us that any lecturer sent to Branches must be practically versed in experimental psychology and clairvoyance (*i.e.*, looking into magic mirrors and reading the future, etc.). Now we consider that such

experiments should originate amongst members themselves, to be of any value in the development of the individual, or to enable him to make progress in his "uphill" path, and therefore earnestly recommend our members to *try* for themselves.



ADYAR PAMPHLETS

No. 72

# A World Religion

~~ANNIE BESANT~~

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## A World Religion

AMONG the many names with which the love and reverence of man have appealed to the Supreme Being, there is none perhaps more full of significance, none whose implications are more important, than the well-known Masonic title, "The Great Architect of the Universe". An architect is not a builder; an architect is one who plans, and who hands over his plan to many others to carry out bit by bit, stone by stone; but, under all the diversities of the many builders, under all the movement and whirl of a great mass of workmen, all are moving to a single end, all are contributing to the carrying out of a single plan, to make an idea manifest in material matter to the world when the plan is carried out in form.

Now there are many ways of reading history. Sometimes in the school a mere mass of dates and names, utterly uninteresting, a matter of memory and not of thought, is given as history; but that is not history; that is only the dry bones, the

<sup>1</sup> A lecture delivered at Glasgow on 6th June, 1911.

skeleton, of history; and the one that has only read history in that way knows nothing of its reality and its teaching. Or again you might read history a little more wisely; not thinking only of the names of Kings and statesmen, but realising the movements of peoples, understanding the great forces by which nations rise, rule and fall, and so play their part in the theatre of the world; but even that is not history in its deepest sense. It is still the corpse. The muscles are there; the nerves are there; the skin, the features are there; but it is a dead body and not a living one. You only begin to understand the fascination, the enthralling interest of history, when you see the events on earth as the projections thrown down on to the earth of spiritual realities in higher and mightier worlds. When you begin to see in the events of history the working of a mighty plan; the shaping of a great purpose; the carrying out down here of the thoughts conceived in the spiritual world; then your body becomes alive, then the form takes on the attribute of the living man pulsing with life. History rises up before you, and you realise that the outer events are but the shadow of the realities, and that the realities that cast the shadows are the spiritual truths of the universe. And as that thought begins to show itself, history becomes illuminated, and the outlines of the plan shine through the tangle of events. Even looking back say a century and a quarter, how different was the world then; how separated in its parts; how ignorant the nations of each other; how

profound the darkness which veiled the East from the West and the West from the East! From time to time before that, as in the reign of Elizabeth, a stray traveller may have gone over to the eastern lands and brought back some message of the wonders there, of delicate art, of exquisite craftsmanship, of treasures which dazzled the imagination of the West; but those travellers, few and far between, knew nothing of the thoughts of the people, though they admired their handiwork; knew nothing of the religions that they followed; nothing of the philosophy that they studied; nothing of the Scriptures on which their lives were built. It was scarcely more than one hundred and twenty years ago when first a touch of eastern science was brought over to western lands, when the great Maire of Paris, Bailly, who perished later in the Reign of Terror, first drew the attention of Europe to the marvellous astronomy of the East. Then there came over some of the stories of the popular faith, copyings of some of the pictures, the sculptures, used in the temples of that ancient faith. There you have the beginning, the foundation, of the science called Comparative Mythology, which in the last century has received such an enormous impulse by the researches of the archæologist and the antiquarian.

You find in some of the earlier books of the nineteenth century the beginnings of that Free Thought movement, which gradually blended with scientific materialism, and made a dangerous foe, menacing the very life of Religion. Some of the books which still are



classics came from France, especially towards the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. Then, a little later, Englishmen joined in the study. But still the best of the East did not come over here: only some of the religious stories and many of the external superstitions came. It was only comparatively lately, in the days of Max Müller, when that splendid series of the Sacred Books of the East was published, that gradually the European mind awakened to the world-treasures of philosophy and wisdom that lay buried in the literature of the East. The German philosophers had touched upon it. Emerson, the famous American essayist, possessed the one copy that existed in America in his day of that now well-known Hindū Scripture, *The Song Celestial*.

Since that time how great the change! Every educated man knows something of the sacred literature of the Hindū, of the Buddhist, of the Chinaman, has tried to read, and endeavoured to grasp and understand; and now we find in the Universities they are beginning to have chairs of Oriental Literature, so that eastern knowledge and western knowledge may supplement each other instead of being regarded as antagonistic to each other; and you can see, if you look through that century, the wonderful change that has come in two directions. First, the gradual bringing of India under the rule of Great Britain, and the familiarising of Great Britain with the Indian thought of the past and of the present; on the other hand, the uprising of the

far East, grappling in a death struggle with a western nation—the war between Russia and Japan, which left the great eastern Power triumphant. Can you catch under that no glimpse of a plan, no working of a determinate end, in guiding the East and West along the road beneficial to humanity at large? Is it not true that the eastern and western minds are drawing together, the one philosophically metaphysical, the other fond of every science that deals with matter? How that eastern mind, subtle and spiritual, is gradually becoming wedded to the western mind, scientific and practical, seeking to turn discoveries and knowledge to the practical prosperity of man. How the eastern ideals are again taking their place, tempered with the practicality of the West. How the eastern lack of public spirit is gradually being made good by the altruism and the public spirit and the patriotism of the West. How Britain is working in India; how India is re-acting on Britain; until you can see gradually forming, amid the dust and the turmoil of the present, the outlines of a mighty World-Empire, with East and West together; mighty World-Powers linking, and marching side by side, until India shall no longer be a constant menace, a danger in the moment of Britain's weakness, but shall be a buttress and a strength; the oldest and the youngest branches of the Aryan family joining hands in one mighty Empire, which, by the peace it will make, will offer a fit field for the spread, for the teaching, of a World-Religion.

All religions now have passed, for all really educated and thoughtful persons, out of the stage in which they tried to convert each other into the stage when they try to understand and learn from each other. All religions are different with a purpose. If great truths are to express themselves fully, it cannot be through a single faith, nor by a single intellectual presentment; and if you will look for a moment at the religions of the world as a whole, you will find that every religion strikes a different note, and not one of these notes is to be spared in the making of the mighty chord which shall arise from humanity to God. For religion is the search for God, and every religion gives us a letter of His Name; and only when the rivalries are over and each religion is speaking out its letter, will the mighty Name shine out complete, through the contribution that every faith has made. The most cursory glimpse of the world's faiths, living and dead, will convince you of the truth of what I say. For every one of them gives out a different note. Every one of them contributes something special to the making of the World-Religion of the future. Not in monotone but in chords and harmony comes out the great revelation of God to man. One religion would be a monotone. The world's religions make a full harmonious chord. And think how different is the dominant idea that goes out from every faith. Think of Hindūism, the oldest of the world's religions. One of your own Scotch divines, who lived for a very long time in India as a

missionary, and founded the great Christian College at Madras, Dr. Miller, has said what, in his opinion, is the contribution of Hindūism to the religious thought of the world. He summed it up as the proclamation of the Immanence of God and the Solidarity of Man. In those two phrases you have but one truth, for if God be immanent in all, then the lives animated by a single life must form one vast solidarity. The one life in all means the brotherhood of the many. Only when we realise that God is seen in everything, do we feel that all that lives belongs to that single life.

Then from Pārsīism comes out the note of Purity, purity of thought, of word, of deed. That is the formula that every Pārsī repeats day by day as he ties his sacred thread. And Buddhism gives right knowledge, right understanding, right thinking. That is the great message of Buddhism to the world. Greece speaks of Beauty, and Rome speaks of Law, and the message of Egypt is Science. Christianity gives the message of Self-sacrifice; Judaism that of Righteousness; and so on, one after another. You see that every religion has its special idea that it gives to the religion of the future, and of all those pearls of truth not one must be lacking when religion's great necklace of jewels is placed round the neck of humanity.

So, looking thus at the religions as each contributing its own thought above all others; realising that the political and social condition of the world is gradually making an area where the World-Religion can grow up, let us next ask what would be the

conditions of such a religion, and what its special gifts to the world?

First of all, I do not believe that the religions of the time will disappear as religions. I believe that they will be related to the World-Religion, as, say, the various Churches of Christendom are related to Christianity. It is just as you find many a Church, many a sect, just as you find many varieties of thought and teaching; but they all look up to the Christ as the supreme Teacher, and accept His gospel as the foundation of their message. So in the World-Religion, the great religions will still exist, each one appealing to a special type and a special temperament of mankind, existing as sects of a single Faith, existing as branches of a single tree, realising their fundamental unity, but preserving their valuable diversity; for by construction and not by destruction will come the fulfilling of the great religious law. For surely diversity is the very condition of a universe and of all its beauty. One expression of truth could never exhaust the contents of a spiritual truth. The intellect divides, separates, classifies; it can never give the full rounded All of the sum which is Truth. A part of it, a fragment of it, an aspect of it—yes—that the intellectual presentment can give; but we need to have them all, in order that the many-faced truth may shine out for the helping and teaching of man.

So I look for a great World-Religion where each religion will have its place, where each great faith will present its own aspect of the truth; but where we all

shall learn from every faith the special view it has to teach, and so widen our minds, enlarge our hearts, and deepen our reverence for the greatness of the truth.

Looking for a moment at that conception, how shall we find that which unites? How shall we discover the method by which the intellectual presentment shall find a common origin in the spiritual truth? I will take two illustrations to show you exactly what I mean, and they are closely connected with each other. I spoke of the different ways of reading history. Let me take for a moment one great drama played on the stage of the world, familiar to you all—the life of the Christ. Now there are two ways in which you may regard it. One tends to divide, the other tends to unite. You may take it purely and entirely as the history of one Man, however divine. A life led in the face of the world, great, inspiring, noble, but only a single life, however divine, with a single life's contents. Round that idea there has been much of controversy, much of struggle, much of antagonism. Questions of scholarship arise, the age of documents, the various readings, how long this manuscript has existed, what particular date can be given to that manuscript, come down or discovered perhaps in some church ruin, some ancient monastery. There is all the turmoil of intellectual strife, all the arguing of scholars and controversialists, everything which makes for controversy and nothing which makes for inspiration. Now it is a story of a single life. Most

people            now that the idea put forward by Strauss that the Christ-story is a myth is entirely out of court. That was one of the lines of attack very popular in the last century, but I doubt if any scholar to-day thinks for one moment that the Christ did not really exist on the stage of history, and teach and preach in Palestine. It is the history then of a life which had the most enormous effect upon mankind. But is that all it is? Or is there something deeper and greater which shall unite where scholarship and criticism divide? Never yet did a great spirit live on earth and live a life which was His alone, with no bearing upon His brethren, with no touching of the mankind to which He came. There is a deeper meaning in the history of the Christ, in which that life shines out in parable and drama, as it were. It is the story of the experience of every human Spirit, as he unfolds from seed into flower and fruit. It was declared by a great Teacher that Christ is the "first-born among many brethren"; it is declared that all men are partakers of the divine Nature; and surely that history loses nothing of its charm, if below the history of one man, however divine, you see your own history as you shall lead it, as you gradually rise from the carnal to the spiritual, and begin to realise the possibilities that lie latent in the Spirit that is man. Then the whole unfolding of that story becomes the expression of a great mystical truth. The birth of the Christ in Bethlehem stands for the birth of the Christ in every one who is rising into realised

divinity, in every one of those in whom S. Paul's phrase is being realised: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." Then you begin to see in that birth the birth of the Christ. In every human Spirit you begin to see the growth in favour with God and man. You see the Spirit in the moment of baptism, when the life flows down upon him from above. You see him in the glory of transfiguration, when the human Spirit begins to realise his own divinity. You see him in the agony of the passion, when the soul approaching Deity finds out its human weakness, and agonises in the last ordeals of the Saint. You see him risen and ascended in the man who has attained the full stature of the Christ. And so you realise, however historical the story, it has a deeper spiritual meaning which underlies the whole, that Christ was living the story of all mankind, as well as a single life in Palestine two thousand years ago. Now it is that mystical story that unites: it is true for all men of every faith, true for all in their upward climb, true for all in their realisation of divinity within themselves; and then it becomes an inspiration, the most potent that man can have for realising the unity.

He also realises through that the possibility of a personal achievement; and then for the first time the words of Christ become literally possible of fulfilment: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." For a man that is only man, that command must remain for ever unfulfilled; but



for a man in whom the seed of God is sown, there is no perfection impossible for him as he passes from strength to strength.

That is the mystical interpretation, and the religion of the future must be based on Mysticism. See how that is carried out in one of the dogmas of the Churches in regard to the Atonement. See how it shows how much of truth there is in it, and, how much of human error has veiled the spiritual truth. For in the ideal of Christ as an external Saviour, however exquisitely beautiful and lovable from the standpoint of those He helps, there is always some feeling of unrest, of disturbance, inasmuch as some one outside is the Helper, and gives us that which we do not realise for ourselves. But in the mystical view of the Atonement with the birth of Christ in the human Spirit, it is a Christ within instead of a Christ without. It is the unfolding of a life, instead of the imputation of the righteousness of another. There is nothing of legality, nor contract, nor materialism, but the opening up of a life that transforms, and makes atonement because it transforms man into God.

You may say: Are you against religious dogma? No. Dogma has its place in all teaching of truth. Science has it, just as much as religion. It is quite dogmatic to say that if you put hydrogen and oxygen together at a certain temperature they will combine. A statement of truth imposed by authority from outside, that is what dogma is, and any such statement of truth is necessary for learning and for teaching. That is what critics of religious dogmas

very often forget. But a dogma, not to be mischievous, must be based on experience and verifiable by experience, and that is sometimes the weak point of religious dogma; but it ought not to be so. All the great religious dogmas are based on experience, though not on the experience of modern people; but that is the fault of modern people and not the fault of the dogma. Every great spiritual truth thrown into dogmatic form and imposed on the awed man by Church, or Pope, or Book, has its origin in human experience in relation to divinity. For the religious consciousness is universal and the great dogmas of the faiths of the world are built on that testimony of the religious consciousness of mankind.

You say: How do you know it? Because you find them in every faith. You find them in every age. Every nation possesses the same truths although in different words, the same great fundamental truths on which every religion is based. They are common truths, and they have been known by the experience of man in touch with the invisible worlds.

Now there is no reason in the world why you should not again be able to verify these truths for yourselves, as in a moment I will show you; but what I want to put to you now is that the difference between the man who accepts the dogma and the Mystic is this: the authority of the receiver of the dogma is outside him, and he has no knowledge which verifies the dogma; but the Mystic knows the truth by sight. The Spirit has faculties as well as the body. There is a science of the

Spirit as much as physical science. The Spirit can gain knowledge experimentally as well as the body, and when a man has reached a certain stage of evolution he needs no other authority to teach him religious truth, for within the depths of his own Spirit there wells up the truth which the other sees from the outside, and an inner authority and not an outer authority reveals the truth that the Mystic knows. He does not believe in God because the Church says: God is. He believes in God because he has found God within himself, and the Spirit knows that is where God is, and naught can ever shake that knowledge. The dogma standing on authority may be undermined by other authority. The dogma based not on demonstration but on a Church or a Book may be shaken to pieces when other books are read and other religions are looked into; but your own knowledge, your own experience, your own realisation of the Deity within you which makes you able to recognise the Deity without you, that nothing can shake; for it is your very own, and you know it, you hold it, and if all the world were to rise against you, it would not be shaken. That is the position of the Mystic. He knows Christ within him. There is the Spirit that is knowledge; and he recognises that which agrees with the key note of his own Spirit.

For there is but one Spirit in many bodies, one Life in many forms, one God in many temples; and so there comes to be but one word and one knowledge, and that belongs equally to all who will to know

and not only to believe, to unfold within themselves the faculty of knowledge which lies within the Spirit of every son of man.

Now Mysticism unites, for all the Mystics of the world agree on the fundamentals of the spiritual consciousness. Dogmatists quarrel ; Mystics reinforce each other ; and on the development of the Spirit in man the religion of the future must depend. Those grow into knowledge ; they will be the pillars of the religion of the future : and dogma will have its proper place in the teaching of the younger and inexperienced, until they have grown into religious manhood. So the mischief of dogma will disappear. It will take its rightful place as part of the education, the religious education, of the man. The dogmas will be taught in many forms in the different faiths, and the one mystical truth they embody will be taught in *the* religion, the World-Religion, as expressed in different ways in the Churches.

But another thing that religion must give us is a science of religion. If religion be true, each of you has those faculties I spoke of, which are to the Spirit what the senses are to the body, and the reasoning mind to the intelligence. It is part of the duty of religion to teach us how to unfold those faculties in ourselves in order that we may know, and religions do teach it and have taught it, only it has slipped so much out of sight to-day. Useful as was much that was done in the Reformation, priceless as is the importance of the assertion of Liberty of Thought and Liberty of Judgment, one

great harm was done to Christianity by that movement. It robbed the protesting communities of much of that occult knowledge which had come down from the days of the Apostles and the Disciples in the unbroken succession of the Church of Rome. The teachings of the Roman Church to-day contain far more occult science than is found in the bishops and the clergy of the communities that take the name of Protestants. It has methods of teaching, methods of training, ways of meditating, which in every great faith are the only ways of awakening those faculties which enable you to know and not only to believe. The faith which leads to man's perfection is laid down in some great Roman Catholic manuals, and it is identical in its stages, its beginnings and its endings with that same faith as taught in Buddhist treatises, as laid down in the Hindū science of Yoga. You might take what you like there, and you will find the teaching the same, the discipline the same, the methods of progress the same, only the words are different. Rome speaks of purification as the first step of that faith. The Hindū and the Buddhist call it the probationary path, on which certain qualifications are to be gained and the qualifications are given one by one exactly, as what is wanted to control and to discipline the moods of the mind and to make a man calm and pure and strong. Then you come to the next step which Rome calls the path of Illumination. The Hindū and the Buddhist call it the path of Initiation, and mark out the various stages on the path, all the great Initiations through which

the disciples pass. The ending for both the Roman calls Union, the Hindū and the Buddhist call Liberation, but in both cases it means the realisation of Divinity, the union of the human Spirit with the divine. A few months ago I was reading with some care a Roman Catholic treatise that any one of you might read with the greatest profit, if you care at all about the scientific side of Mysticism. It is written by a Jesuit father, and in the translation is called *The Graces of Interior Prayer*. It has received the approval of the Pope and of some of the high officials of the Roman Catholic Church. Now in that book, at the end of it, in dealing with Union, the writer speaks of the deification of man, man become divine, the union between God and man, so close, so utter, that man is deified. Now I confess I was surprised to find a phrase so strong outside the Theosophical, Hindū and Buddhist treatises. I did not know that Rome would go so far in explaining what the end of the path connoted, and then I remembered that I ought to have known it, for one of the great teachers of the Church, S. Ambrose, gave the noble sentence: "Become what you are." Does it sound a paradox? It contains a great and profound meaning. Become the manifested God that you are already in seed and in germ; for, if you think for a moment, you cannot become that which you are not. Only that which exists in you in possibility can ever be manifested by you in actuality. You must have it within before it can show itself without, and in that great

sentence of S. Ambrose the idea of the universal religion is declared. The human Spirit is divine, the offspring of God. Become then in outer manifestation that which you are in inner reality ; and the World-Religion of the future will bring out the way again in sight of the people, will show them how to walk ; it will lead them into a knowledge of their own Divinity ; mystical in its teaching, so that the teaching can be translated by all the religions into the varied dogmas ; scientific with the knowledge of the Spirit, so that men may learn to develop the spiritual faculties and then use them for the perfecting of their own nature ; with no antagonists, for it will be universal ; with no quarrels within it, for it will be all-inclusive. That mighty World-Religion is to be proclaimed by the supreme Teacher, the Teacher of Angels and of Men ; that, in very truth, is on the threshold : its foot is at the door. Look around you, and you will see the signs of the change. Look abroad over the world, and you will recognise that mighty synthesis is coming, into which all the world-faiths shall be built and know themselves as one. When religious hatreds have passed, when religious controversies have disappeared, when men have learned the supreme truth so often preached, so little practised : "Let him that loveth God love his brother also" ; when out of the World-Religion has grown the World-Peace ; when out of the World-Faith has grown the World-Service ; then religion shall be what it ought to be, the helper of the downtrodden,

the protector of the weak, the teacher of the ignorant, the raiser of the fallen ; then religion will not only tie man to God but man to man, and it will be realised that knowledge of God is best expressed in Service to Man.